A MUSLIM SIR GALAHAD

by

HENRY OTIS DWIGHT

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A Muslim Sir Galahad

A Present Day Story of Islam in Turkey

By
HENRY OTIS DWIGHT
Author of "Constantinople and Its Problems," "Turkish Life in War Time," etc.

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 125 North Wabash Ave.
Toronto: 25 Richmond Street, W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

Introductory Note

THERE is a pathetic significance in this true story of a heart quest for a better religion than is to be found in the wild fastnesses of the Kurdish mountains. There is a strange fascination to many a thoughtful soul in the "Man with a black hat and a white life" who bears the gospel message to the Eastern world. To many who hide their secret yearnings amid the shadows of Islam he brings welcome news of a religion which shows a better way and teaches a higher life. The symbolic description of the missionary above given represents not an unusual verdict of native public opinion, whether his teachings are or are not accepted. Beneath his black coat and his foreign attire is discovered a white heart, and the light of the heart shines out in the life itself, and imparts a luminous charm to what at first may have seemed to be a forbidding and alien exterior.

The young hero of this story is typical, I believe, of many wistful searchers after a

more satisfying guide than they find in Islam, and they discover in the missionary one who reflects in his gentle and kindly attitude, and his loving service, the character of that Supreme Guide who may be trusted to point the way to a nobler life here and to grander hopes beyond.

Dr. Dwight's local colouring is genuine, and he gives true glimpses into real experiences in the lives of thoughtful Moslems whose hearts have not found peace and spiritual rest in Islam. This story of Selim suggests struggles and perils of which the free born know nothing. The author has lived for many years in the atmosphere of incidents such as he records, and can vouch for the basis of truth which underlies them.

JAMES S. DENNIS.

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I

THE KURD'S BED

IN the far east of Turkey, high among the spurs of the Zagros mountain chain, is a green plateau renowned in all that region for its exquisite beauty. Very likely it is the bed of some ancient lake, about two miles long. It is shut in on the east by the snowy peaks of the Persian frontier. On the north and south its bounds are the tangled ridges of Shehrezor. On the west it looks out over a deep and wooded valley to blue and distant hills. A stream of clear cold water from the mountains wanders across its northern end, and all through the summer when the lands below are roasted brown, gracious rains keep its herbage green. Nature has lavished upon it her best skill in landscape gardening, placing here and there grayish clumps of rock-roses and emerald ilex oak and other low-growing shrubs; and now scattering, now massing flowers of amazing distinction in form and colour. Dwellers in the hot cities of the plains would fain climb the mountains to so charming a summer retreat. But it is

preëmpted by Kurdish nomads. So the Turks call this plateau *Kurd-yataghi*—the Kurd's Bed.

When the Mikaeli clan of Kurds set forth in early spring from their winter village on the southern plains near Baghdad, as their forefathers did, they brought their wives on horseback like gypsies, their children in baskets lashed to the pack saddles, their horses and donkeys, their big and fierce shepherd dogs, and their great flocks of sheep and goats, to this lovely wild garden. The black tents of the clan were pitched in a long straggling group on the bank of the dancing, sparkling stream at the northern end of the plateau. The larger these tents the higher the dignity of their occupants. The great six-poled tent, a little apart from the others at the western end of the camp, belonged to the chief of the clan, Hassan Bey.

On one peerless afternoon in Ramazan (the month of fasting) Hassan Bey's old servant, Suleiman, was sitting on a log in front of the tent where his master lay dozing away the last weary hour before sunset. Yahya, the head-shepherd, squatted on his heels near by.

"I tell you, Suleiman," said he, "there is no end to my troubles. It surely was a

shepherd who made the proverb that when death came into the world its excuse was worry."

"The flocks always bring us the same old headaches. What's the matter now?"

"It isn't the flocks so much as it is the men. They say Selim, son of Hassan Bey, is not an easy believer. Mulla Mehmed said in his sermon that every round of worship causes a new angel to be created whose duty it is to beseech God to remember in mercy the worshipper. Selim heard and said, 'God is merciful outright, and has no need to create angels to ask Him to be merciful.'"

"Don't worry yourself to death over Selim. Mothers ought to bring forth such children by fives. The flocks give you worry enough without your minding Selim's religious ideas."

"Well, but you know this way of talking is not good for religion. They'll say it's no use to pray next. Selim told somebody he would rather not go to heaven. If he can't do it at least let him say it."

"When Selim gets an idea he goes after it like a donkey that sees a melon rind. But he does the prayers all right ——"

The two men sprang to their feet, for Has-

san Bey in his long blue robe appeared at the entry of his tent.

"Peace to you, Yahya," said Hassan Bey. "How about the moping ewe? Did you cure her?"

"She hasn't eaten anything since her lamb died; and she would not let another lamb come near her. I got big Fikri to help while I held a hungry lamb under my cloak. Fikri fondled the moping ewe a little. Then suddenly he put his fingers into her nostrils and clutched the fleece by the tail and lifted her from the ground while he spun round on his toes like a whirling dervish. When he dropped her the ewe was dizzy and I popped the lamb from under my cloak and put it by her side. The lamb was hungry and there was no more trouble. You see the ewe had her memory shaken up by the whirl; and now the lamb is going to be a fatty, as it has two dams."

"That is good. How about the people that camped at the other end of the plateau? Did you send them away?"

"I sent them away twice. But that man, like a post, stands and understands nothing. We shall have to go out some night and throw them into the gully and their tents after them."

"That's all right. But wait until after the fast is over. You were saying something about Selim. What is it?"

"Oh, nothing; we all love Selim very much. Honey drips from his mouth."

"But you said something about his going to heaven."

"Oh, it was nothing, I assure you," said Yahya in confusion.

"Tell me what Selim said to you."

"He didn't say it to me. They say that he doesn't want to go to heaven."

"Well, want it or not, he will have to go there, for he is very careful about the fast and the ablutions and the regular worship down to the smallest word. The trouble with Selim is that his ear doesn't hear half that comes out of his mouth. He isn't an enemy of religion although you think so. But leave this to me. I'll stop his thinking such things. It is nearly sunset; we must get ready for the worship."

Suleiman and his fellow servants brought out prayer rugs and spread them on the grass beyond the brook. Meanwhile the women in their gaily coloured dresses, their necklaces of small coins and cloves and all-spice, and their painted handkerchiefs pinned over round caps of white felt, were bustling

about among the tents ; for dinner would soon be demanded. They could not join in the worship of the men.

When Hassan Bey in his blue robe walked to the brookside servants dipped water to pour into his palms that he might wash his face and feet. As he washed he muttered, "In the name of God the merciful and compassionate." All along the banks of the brook the men of the camp, without one laggard, were performing ablutions in the same solemn way. The most of them wore a kind of blouse of red and white striped cotton stuff, and wide woolen trousers coloured after the fashion of the clan in broad stripes of brown and yellow. Those better off among them wore over their blouses sleeveless black vests of fleece-like surface, decorated in front with gold lace. All had the ends of their shirt sleeves, which were so long as to drag on the ground, tied behind their necks or wrapped around their wrists. A girdle bound the waist of each stuck with as many daggers and pistols as its owner could get, while every head was crowned by a high cone of gray felt wrapped with a turban of gay cloths to the limit of its owner's purse.

As the sun began to sink behind the hills a solemn feeling, akin to that of watchers at

a death-bed, silenced the voices of the men. One heavy voice chanted a prayer not found in the Mohammedan ritual—a reminiscence perhaps from their ancestors the fire-worshippers. "Oh, Lord," he said, "this, the greatest of Thy creatures, now passes from our sight. We know not whether we shall see it again ; but until it comes back to light the world keep Thou us from harm. Its light has fallen on our sins. Let our sins go with the sun to the bottom of the great deep, and if from day to day we newly see Thy mighty sun, with its return may we newly see the mercies of Thy hand."

When the last ray had flashed from the crest of the hills of blue, and the sun had fully disappeared, Hassan Bey fired his pistol as a signal that one more day's fast had ended. Instantly every man, muttering "Glory be to the mighty Lord," drank deeply from his water bottle, and with eager, trembling hands lighted his pipe. Since the early dawn, excepting children too young to take pride in fasting like their parents, no one in that camp had cooled his parched lips with water or had tasted food or used tobacco to calm his nerves.

Before the pipes were half smoked out a young man standing on the green slope near

the fold of the lambs gave the *ezan* or Arabic call to prayer which is heard five times every day by two hundred million Mohammedans of all nations and tongues. This *muezzin*, named Selim, wore the white turban of a student and the long robe of a gentleman. He was a tall, athletic youth of twenty, and that son of the chief whose habit of thinking about things had caused such anxiety to the head-shepherd. Several of the clansmen, like the shepherd brothers of Joseph, hated him for his dreams and his words.

At the sound of his fine tenor voice, which reached beyond the farthest tent, the Kurds put away their pipes, took off their sandals like Moses at the bush, and knelt on their rugs in rows, facing the south, where lies the sanctuary of Mecca. A little in front Hassan Bey knelt with his back to his tribesmen, while with bowed head he muttered inaudibly the words of intention to worship. When he rose to his feet all the men rose with him. Each, following the action of the chief, raised his hands, palm to the front with the thumbs touching the ears. As Hassan Bey said in a strong sonorous monotone "*Allah ekber*"—God is most great—the congregation chanted the words in unison. Folding his hands in front of him Hassan Bey led the congrega-

tion in the declaration of adoration: "Glory be to God! Praised and blessed be Thy name, O Most High! There is no other God but Thee! I take refuge in God from Satan the be-stoned!"

Now the sweet tenor voice of young Selim led the people in reciting the first chapter of the Koran: "In the name of God the merciful and the compassionate. Praise God, the Lord of all creatures, King of the day of judgment. Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide Thou us in the straight path, the path of those to whom Thou art gracious, not of those with whom Thou art angry and who go astray."

To this Hassan Bey's deep voice added, "God is the only God, the Eternal. He begetteth not, neither is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him!"

Hassan Bey then led his people through the prescribed form of worship. As he uttered aloud the words demanded by each change of posture, the people followed his words and his movements with military exactness. There is no question as to the power of the body to express emotion. The Mussulman litany is chiefly composed of repetitions of fourteen short phrases. All might be said by a Christian in his worship. But the

distinctive feature of the service is the change of posture at each successive stage. The worshipper by slow and stately bows towards Mecca, made by all in perfect unison, acknowledges the Divine Presence. By kneeling with bowed head he shows his humble expectancy; and by suddenly throwing himself forward until his forehead touches the ground, repeating the quick action three times, he expresses an overpowering sense of his own nothingness before his Creator. The Kurds on that mountain plateau were outlandish in appearance. They might carelessly have been classed as outside the pale of the worshippers of Jehovah. The strange garments which they wore had nothing to do with the question, since they were much nearer than yours or mine to the clothes worn by Moses and the prophets. In this vesper service they were worshipping God.

After the ceremony was finished the men gathered up the rugs, and cheerily chaffing one another as they lighted their pipes they hurried to their tents and the long, full meal which would be their breakfast. Several small boys nine or ten years of age were in the crowd; for the children early stand in the prayer line to learn the formulas and the postures of worship. Two of the boys,

Ismail and Jemil, were squabbling over the question of how many "rounds" each had done.

Ismail said, "I did two rounds, and then I lost my count."

"I did three," said Jemil with all the pride of youthful virtue.

"No, you didn't," said Ismail. "In the round when you bowed you said, 'God is most great,' instead of 'Praise God the great One.' Besides, your back wasn't straight when you said it. You ought to have begun again and done it over; that round doesn't count."

"Your back was all humped up when you bowed," retorted Jemil angrily. "That doesn't count either."

The young religionists were at the point of battle when their elders interfered. The men were too hungry to delay then; but they promised the children a chance to show which could pray best in a little competition after dinner. Each would then do a round and the one most scrupulously careful would win an extra ration of dates. So love of piety was encouraged in both.

In the Muslim vocabulary a "round" of worship is a complete series of genuflections with the correct words of adoration rightly

placed. Three or four "rounds" make up the whole service. This tends to make worship a more or less mechanical exercise which can be entered on a score-card like the events in an athletic meet. When the service has been carefully performed, the worshipper, like some of us on leaving church, feels reinstated as a fully acceptable servant of God. Evil deeds do not cut off a Muslim from God's favour any more than a theft of jam from the pantry cuts off a boy from his family. Jemil and Ismail squabbling over the degree of their perfection already perceived the importance of form in the Mohammedan system.

This worship of the Mohammedan system with its rigid rules carefully observed has another consequence. It breeds a self-satisfaction that is truly delightful. By it a man is fortified against conscience, for he does the prescribed worship five times every day.

So it comes to pass that these Kurds, sturdy, energetic, hospitable and many of them well worth knowing, are on their religious side the most inflammable of men. Let a word slur their religious perfection, and therefore their system of religion, and rage does not express the madness with which they will attack the blasphemer of their faith.

Yet in such an environment a man infatuated with an original idea sometimes appears who is scolded like a duck among chickens and forced to smother his idea or suffer martyrdom. Several such men are mentioned in the history of Islam. Some were cursed by the orthodox as schismatics, and some, who were bright stars of literature, were finally disposed of by being flayed alive. When Hassan Bey assured the anxious head-shepherd that he would make Selim stop thinking strange thoughts, he took upon himself the plain duty of every Mohammedan father towards a son who tolerates ideas.

II

AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

IN the early '90's there was a little Scotch woman, who carried on a school in a particularly isolated and ignorant colony of Jews in Constantinople. The children loved their teacher. Their parents were glad enough to have their children taught. Then all at once the school had no attractions for the children and the parents avoided the teacher, even to crossing the road at sight of her. To their friends and gossips the Jews explained that the teacher was a worshipper of idols, with whom they could have no relations.

The little Scotch missionary on sitting down to her lonely supper always bowed her head and gave thanks before beginning to eat. Her teapot stood before her, covered by an embroidered tea cozy which was shaped like the battle hat of Napoleon. Peepers at the window had never seen a Scotch tea cozy; nor did they know why a woman should say grace before meat. In their ignorance their imagination had full

scope and it wrecked the school because it transformed the lonely woman with a thankful heart into an idolater and her wonderful tea cozy into an idol. And so one more squabble between religions was set down on the long black list of those which have sprung from the fancies of ignorance.

The ignorance of a Kurd like Hassan Bey was enough to make him gasp if he could have realized it and to keep him in hot water, had he not been isolated from the world by habits, language, and mode of life. That he could not see his own ignorance, and that his isolation fortified it made him a prominent figure in the adventures of Selim. Just at that time of the month of fasting he was largely occupied, notwithstanding the facts, in pleasing estimates of his own virtues because of his benefactions to the poor and his affable treatment of the elders of his clan. In that month among Mohammedans everywhere one may see at evening the poor standing expectantly at the gate of the rich. They come heavy hearted in hunger and want; they go laughing with abundance to break their fast. This custom of giving portions to the poor during Ramazan is one of the pleasing features of Islam.

Hassan Bey, as soon as the vesper service

was ended, ordered portions given to ten or twelve poor families. Five well-to-do clansmen he invited to share his own evening breakfast. Ravenous as winter wolves they hurried to the great six-poled tent. They cast off their outer garments; they laid aside their ferocious array of weapons (not out of reach); they tied their long shirt sleeves behind their necks to bare their arms; and they seated themselves cross-legged in a compact circle on the carpets around a steaming kettle of soup of curds flavoured with cheese. A serious affair was before these bearded and turbaned men, and the bunch of wooden spoons lying ready on the dining cloth were the weapons of attack. All were moved by a single passion —to eat a full meal. But all solemnly joined in saying the simple grace before meat: "In the name of God the compassionate and the merciful." Possibly the recognition of God at that supreme moment required more than one readily realizes of self-control.

Then they fell to, eating rapidly, appreciatively and noisily; these distinctive features of table manners being laudable under Oriental canons of culture. From behind the carpet-covered reed partitions of the tent, soft voices of women and merry laughter of girls could be heard. But in the group of

busy men time failed for speech. The only voice at the evening breakfast-table was that of the host hospitably urging his guests to make sure that each secured his full share.

These Kurds think it waste to kill a sheep or a lamb for food, except on very extraordinary occasions. So the evening meal depended on quantity for its effect rather than on variety. A large platter of pilaf made of cracked wheat and garnished with curds and eggs, bread, white butter, white cheese, and a few dates and dried apricots completed the bill of fare. Haji Yusuf, a stout full-bearded pilgrim, sighed as he gathered the last grains of pilaf with his spoon, saying, "Excuse me! Any man who will leave pilaf on the platter ought to have his spoon break on its way to his mouth." And then Hassan Bey said that the hour had come for evening prayer.

The men stood shoulder to shoulder, and four times carefully repeated the bowings and kneelings, and the recitation of the words of adoration used in the service they had held at vespers. After completing the four "rounds" of genuflections, they sat down and lit their pipes.

Looking at his watch when the pipes were thoroughly in action, Hassan Bey said to his

guests, "We have two hours for chatting. Then come three hours for sleep before the women call us to eat again. Thank God we can eat without stint! Else how could we live until another sun sets!"

Mustapha Aga, a very sleek old man with a grizzled beard, remarked, "When God shuts one door, He opens a thousand. If one asks proof of the divine origin of Islam here it is. In Ramazan one can eat double without harm, that none may regret the fast."

"Yes, and a further proof is that the Most High did not require us to make our flocks keep the fast, too," said Yahya, the head-shepherd, who, like Jacob when he kept Laban's sheep, was beginning to increase in goods.

"By the way," said Sayid, the travelled one, "your watch, Hassan Bey, reminds me. Did you hear what the old Sheikh at Arbil did to his watch?"

"What was that?"

"He let the boundary commission stay a week at his castle and fed the whole crowd and their guards. So the English government sent him a nice watch. One day a Mulla who was visiting there told him that the English make watches because they alone know how to keep a pig's bristle alive. They put one in

the watch and it works of itself just like the heart of a man. It turns all the wheels. 'Open the watch,' he said, 'and you will see it curling and uncurling all the time, although the English ate up the pig long ago.'

"So the Arbil Sheikh opened his watch and sure enough there was the coil of hair curling and uncurling, all of itself. The Sheikh threw the watch upon the pavement, and pounded the thing to small pieces with a big stone, saying, 'O Lord, how long shall these things be in the land of Islam? May curses follow the father and the mother and the wife and the sister of him who made, and of him who gave this thing.'"

"Let it be no offense to you, but Europeans love swine like their own children," said Haji Yusuf with conviction; "they will not wear pointed shoes like the rest of the world; but even have the toe of the shoe cut square like the pig's snout."

"It is in memory of the disciples of Jesus," said Yahya, the shepherd, leaning forward in his eagerness to be heard. "Mulla Mehmed told me that he read in the life of Jesus, upon whom be peace, that when His disciples had no bread they demanded that He feed them by a miracle. For this He

changed them all into swine, and the swine rushed headlong down the hill and were drowned in the sea, so that the sea is filthy near that shore to this day."

"Great God!" said Osman Aga stroking his black beard. "So wonderful a prophet as Jesus ought to have known how to manage His disciples better. He did nothing like what our prophet did; Mohammed the blessed was much greater; may God enlarge his race."

"Yet some Muslims become Christians," said the experienced Sayid.

"And get their throats cut for their reward," said Osman Aga, with his hand at his throat.

"Certainly!" said Mustapha Aga unctuously. "What could they expect?"

"When I was in Constantinople," continued Sayid, "an old man told me that years ago he saw a young fellow, a Turk not older than Selim here, who had become a Christian. They made him kneel in the middle of the street and sliced off his head. And then the English and the Russians and the rest of the infidel kings frightened our Sultan into ordering that Muslims should be no more executed for becoming Christians."

"God forbid!" said Hassan Bey. "God

forbid that such an order be obeyed. Such a renegade I would kill. If he were my own son, I would kill him though I had to chase him to China."

"To such lengths do our Sultans go for the favour of the infidels," remarked Haji Yusuf. "If I may venture to say it, they yield to the Europeans in everything instead of cutting off part of the Christians every few years to prevent increase. The old Sultans have mounted their old horses and gone, and Islam suffers."

"Nevertheless," said Sayid, "these Christians from Europe make return for favour shown. Look at the curious and useful things they bring. They bring steamers big enough to carry our whole tribe, and guns and cannon which we can't make; and then the little things that we use. Look at the matches; look at their knives, and their pistols; look at their cloth, coloured as ours is but smooth, and true in the figure, and yet costing only half."

"We all know," said Mustapha Aga, the words dripping from his lips, "that Christians are the offscouring of the earth. They owe their prosperity to the will of Almighty God to test the patience of His chosen people who do not envy them. At the same time it

works for the advantage of the people of God in another way, for we are the first to profit by their toil. Where would the Europeans look for a market if we did not buy the gim-cracks which they make?"

"Oh, pardon me," said Haji Yusuf, "these fine things are all of the devil. Satan walks visibly with men in those lands, and, as the Koran says, teaches them curious tricks. That is why the Christians follow Satan instead of God. To talk with them is to play with nettles."

Selim, as the youngest of the group, had listened silently up to this point. Now, his eyes sparkling, he said, "Europe must be a good place to learn things. I would like to live there a while."

"Great God! Selim," said his cousin Osman, "I never saw any one like you for trying to milk a dead sheep!"

The older men all looked at Selim in amazement. Sayid and Yahya the shepherd were smiling, for it was by such outbursts that Selim had acquired the nickname of "the Free-thinker." Hassan Bey merely remarked sarcastically to the company, "Selim, after twenty years of silence, has made one remark and that is wrong."

"But how," asked Selim hotly, "can a

man learn unless he goes to those who know?"

"From the Evil One," replied his father, "men learn evil only."

"The Europeans," said Mustapha Aga sententiously, "show who teaches them by the restless haste seen in all that they do. Haste is always of the devil."

"Pardon me," said Haji Yusuf with his most winning smile, "what can Europeans know that is worth knowing? They have not the Koran; that settles the question. Even the Gospel which they do have is not held in memory. If the Christians in all Europe who know the Gospel by heart were gathered together they would not equal the number of Muslims in one of our cities who can recite the Koran from end to end. May God keep our Selim from evils seen and unseen!"

"Everybody says," retorted Selim, "that we know all there is to know. In the seminary at Suleimaniye there are books written a thousand years ago. Here in the camp are the sheep. I want to learn things of use. You all admit that the Europeans know things which we do not. Why should we not learn from the Europeans, rejecting, of course, what is improper or contrary to our faith?"

"Selim," said Hassan Bey sternly, "you must have found your soul in the wilderness, not in my house. Men never yet got milk from a bull."

The weight of these conservative opinions silenced the young man. In fact the conversation flagged after this depressing incident and the party soon broke up. Selim, however, was affected in another way. He knew that he had it in him to be wiser, better, more manly; and from that moment a vague aspiration became a resolution in his soul. In some way he would learn to know, and so be a more noble man, as befitted his station as heir to the position of Chief of the Mikaeli clan.

III

AT DAISY TIME

AFTER the daisies had begun to deck the plateau with jaunty white tracery, a new duty fell to the shepherds. Towards evening each day the ewes were brought to the camp to be milked. When the girls of the clan had come off with flying colours from the delicate task of persuading the coy creatures, the shepherds let each ewe in turn pass into the fold of the lambs. This milking of the flock was the social event of the day. To it the younger people came from all over the camp, as to a parade. The older folks and the sick were furnished with rugs and cushions near the tents as if to see a chariot race that would stir their blood.

It was a sight worth seeing, and one which the Kurdish poets love to record. The whole flock was in motion like a wheel, checked by picket-posts of shepherds from dashing away. A score or two of girls and young women broke into the flock for the milking. The ewes, eager to reach their lambs, were not pleased to delay and give up their treasure;

they had to be coaxed like wayward children and fondled, and perhaps held in a clinging hug by one girl while another drew the rich foaming fluid into jug or basin. Sometimes a sheep escaped the detaining arms and struck out for a run, springing high in the air to see some outlet from the mob of her white-fleeced fellows. Sometimes the shepherds guarding the way to the fold being overcareful at one point let a sheep from another part of the swirling ring dodge them, making straight for the hurdle fence and her imprisoned offspring. But a racing sheep is handicapped by a jacket that favours the hand of restraint, and the shepherds flinging themselves upon her like a ball player upon a coveted base would clutch her by the fleece and carry rather than drive her back to the restless flock. Sweeter to a Kurd than any orchestra is the chorus of the bleating dams; meantime the lambs within the fold, hearing the well-known voices, add to the general uproar by their shrill cries of entreaty. The lively emotions of the hour bring the sheep and their masters together like members of one great family; and all at their best.

Selim was lounging on the grass like the other unoccupied young men; watching the strenuous activities of the shepherds and the

milkmaids; admiring the deftness of the girls, the single purpose of the sheep, the hysterical excitement of the lambs, and the quick certainty with which each mother after being let into the fold picked her own lamb out of a hundred, and instantly fell into the mute raptures of mother love. A pleasure of ownership was added to the pleasure of the function, for the larger part of the flocks belonged to his father or to his beloved uncle Kemal Aga.

Notwithstanding his fitful lapses into desire to know something beyond the limits of the tribe, Selim was shaped by nature to be a sheep-master, proud of the great flocks that fed on the pasture-land in front of him, proud of the isolation due to the nomad's manner of life, and proud of his birth that gave him eminence among his people. From the time when sounds first carried meaning to his brain his birthright of nobility had been said and sung in his ears. On his father's side his lineage linked him with Osman, the third Caliph of Islam. On the side of his mother, Fatima, the line of descent led straight to Abu Bekr, the first Caliph and the father-in-law of the prophet Mohammed. Hardly less important in the eyes of his father was the fact that the Mikaeli clan, over which the boy

would one day be chief, belonged to the great tribe of Jaff, which still clings to the mountainous region where, long before Caliphs were imagined, their ancestors the Medes formed the flower of the armies of Darius the Great. It was natural for Selim, feeling the blood of such ancestors coursing through his veins, to scorn some things to which common men stoop.

By way of giving the boy a bearing becoming his rank, from the time when he was seven or eight years old, Hassan Bey used to have him sit by his side whenever the reception-room of the tent was filled with visitors. It was an ordeal to be dreaded. Selim, the well-born, sat apart, a model of dignity, dressed in a robe like his father's and crowned with a neat little turban. Outside the tent his half brothers, children of a bond-woman, trotted around in plebeian freedom, all the happier that when the great chief was looking the other way they could make faces and stick out the tongue of scorn at their aristocrat brother. This set of experiences too had a later reaction; for the boy not being destined to be a prig became a possible insurgent against conceited formalism.

Whatever knowledge Selim had of literature was due to his father's determination,

for camps of Kurdish nomads have no schools. Arabic and Kurdish Selim knew from babyhood. At eleven years of age he knew no word of Persian. But his father set him daily lessons in an old Persian grammar to be conned by shutting his ears to the lure of the woods, to be recited by the camp-fire at night when others were asleep, to be purged of mistakes by whacks of the wooden fire shovel in the heavy hand of his instructor, and to be clung to through fear ; for his father had many times threatened, in case he failed, to cut his throat in order to spare the world an addition to its hordes of blockheads. So after five tearful years Selim had learned Persian grammar from a book written entirely in Persian and knew it to the last dot. For reward he had admission to the gardens of Persian literature, and furthermore a conviction which braced up his life that labour laughs at impossibilities.

The women of the household shared largely in Selim's education. They taught him unwritten fragments of sacred history, explaining the cleft tail of the swallow as a reminiscence of her good deed in warning Adam of the malicious schemes of the serpent ; for the serpent in wrath struck at the swallow and missed all but the tail which

bears the wedge-shaped slash of the serpent's jaws to this day; they taught him never to burn the wood of the almond tree; for Aaron's rod that budded was a branch from the almond; they taught him bits of eschatology; how one must pray for death to come on a Friday, when all people join in worship, since on that day the Recording Angel is too busy with the good to question the bad, thus leaving to those who need it a loophole of escape from the consequences of a reckless life; they taught him to judge between the good and the bad before the last day, for an old man whose beard grows white at the side first is sure to be a good man, whereas a bad man's beard whitens first in the middle. Selim being naturally inquisitive immediately set himself a problem concerning his father, for Hassan Bey's beard had whitened all over at once! The women of course amused him with wonder-tales of astrology and magic, which he thirstily absorbed, until at twelve years of age he had a keen ambition to become a magician as great as Daniel the prophet. By stories with a moral, like Æsop's fables, the women roughly outlined for the boy some ethical principles. They impressed him with the latent brutality of self-will by repeating the old story of two

boys who saw their old grandfather eagerly hobbling from his tent to watch the young men exercise the horses, and tied the feeble old man to the tent-pole merely to hear the shrill quavering tones of his squeals for release.

All this chatter of the women permanently influenced Selim's character. It disposed him, not without qualms of conscience, to seek wisdom as the women did outside of the Koran, the source of all useful knowledge; it fixed in his heart a sense of the rights of others which in some degree acts as an antidote to the poisonous fumes of selfishness. In short, by some peculiarity of temperament, this young fellow had drawn from the common environment notions very unlike those favoured by his kin. This was no more surprising than for the violet to draw qualities unlike those of the poppy from the patch of soil that nourishes both.

While the girls with glowing cheeks pressed their work to its conclusion, Selim was pleasantly ruminating on the restive pertinacity of the sheep restrained like himself from attaining a very proper object of desire. But he was not a pessimist that he should brood over his grievances. The sky was too blue, the grass too green, the tie between the lambs

in the fold and their anxious mothers too nearly human to let him centre thought upon himself. He savoured a content of which he could not imagine the like elsewhere in the wide world. It was a cheery hail which he gave to his cousin, Osman Aga, who happened to saunter in his direction.

Osman threw himself on the grass and began to recount the adventures of his journey with five hundred sheep from the lower pasture. Not one of the party had time to scratch his head the night they camped in the Black Gorge. From dark until dawn they had to watch the flimsy brush barriers of the fold, for there were many wolves about. Such a night made it a precious relief to reach the plateau where there were men and dogs a plenty to call for help when the wolf skulks through the brush.

"Where is Kemal Aga?" asked Selim. "I have not seen him since you got back."

"Father? Oh, he moves slowly and gets left behind sometimes. He is near camp by this time."

"You surely did not leave him without help?"

"Great God! No; he has his old donkey, the lame one with half an ear gone, you know. There, did you see that? Sabri's

Ayesha was milking her father's big brown ewe, and the very instant she let go, the creature vaulted the hurdles of the fold. Love for their young sets these beasts on fire!"

But Selim was no longer interested in the sheep. He pictured to himself his old uncle wearily urging the lame donkey up the mountainside while his kin were taking their pleasure.

"Perhaps Kemal Aga has got into trouble," said Selim. "Let's send some of the men down the road to meet him."

"Great God!" cried Osman, sitting up, "what is the use of doing that? In an hour it will be dark as ink. Besides, Hemze is somewhere down the road; I had to leave him behind. The four horned ram wandered away the night of the thunder-storm. Husno waited to make sure by several flashes of lightning, and then came to tell me the ram was missing. At daylight I sent Hemze to find the beast. There comes Hemze now, and empty handed, the worthless fellow!—God be with you, Hemze! Didn't you find the ram?"

"No, I saw nothing of it; but I came on three tents of the Hekri clan who were on our trail. The ram was not with their bunch

of sheep; there was no sign of meat or fleece. I wanted to take a look in the tents but they knew I was sheep-hunting and did not leave the way open. I could prove nothing and so I came away."

"Great God! Hemze, we'll pick up one of theirs in exchange. What were they doing on our trail? Of course they stole it. Did you see my father on the road?"

"Yes; may you live a thousand years!"

Selim started. "You do not mean to say that he is dead?" he asked.

"Even God's mercy does not interpose for one who has breathed his allotted number of breaths. May you live forever!"

"Where did you find him?" asked Selim.

"We found the old donkey first. He was in the Water Valley, still alive but worn out and in his last agonies. Kemal Aga must have walked quite a distance, but he was evidently feeble, for he had sat down many times. When his strength gave out he fell, and where he fell he died, right in the trail. I passed through the brush and missed him the first time."

"Did you bury him?" asked Osman, who had silently let Selim show emotion for both.

"Yes, I went back and got those Hekri fellows to help. They washed him. He was

very old and only bones. Then we said the burial service together and we buried him with his face to the sunrise. The angel will speak gently to him, for he had all the signs of a Muslim upon him even to the hair on his arms. God pity him!"

"God have mercy on his soul!" said Osman. "As soon as we can get some mourning women from Suleimaniye we will make a great mourning for him. He was a great man. As for those Hekri men perhaps we may as well not take their sheep but call it even. They did good merit. But now I am the head of the family. I am going to take the bay mare now. My brothers always have made a fuss about my using that mare. Now they will have to shut their mouths."

Selim sat in silence. His heart loathed the cool selfishness of his cousin. He loved his uncle, to whom he owed his life when long ago his father would have killed him as a hopeless ass. He now said to Osman, "How could you leave your poor old father to come on alone?"

"Great God! Don't shake your head at me like a billy goat. He was so old that he really could do nothing with the flocks, and he got used to taking care of himself. It was God's will to call him. If not yester-

day, to-morrow. I must go back to the tents."

Selim too arose to his feet. As he turned towards the camp he saw his father standing not far away smiling as he watched the busy milking scene. "May you have long life; Uncle Kemal Aga is dead," he said as he joined his father.

"How did that happen?" asked Hassan Bey.

"They left him to get along as best he could when they moved up from the lower pasturage. He could not keep up and so he died. Hemze and some Hekri clansmen buried him."

"God pity his soul! What were the Hekri men doing on our trail?"

"I don't know. It was cruel of Osman! Uncle Kemal was left behind like an orphaned puppy."

"Oh, well, his troubles are past. He was too old to be of any good to the tribe. But he was a great man in his day, and your mother loved him much. We will make a great mourning for him as soon as we can bring the mourning women from Suleimaniye. Now I shall send one of the girls to tell your mother. Then I can go in to comfort her."

The inhumanity that justified Osman in

leaving the aged man as a useless incumbrance filled Selim's heart with execration. He climbed the hill behind the camp, and threw himself on the ground by a fragrant clump of rock-roses. His heart ached for his Uncle Kemal, sitting on that old donkey and watching his flocks go by; for he must wait until the road was clear before he could venture to travel. His sons were caracoling on fine horses; the horses were his, not theirs. The sheep and the goats that crowded the way, the pack train carrying camp outfit were all his property. Yet no servant in the column could be spared to help him. Then Selim thought of the poor old man alone struggling along the rough road after his donkey gave out. His limbs were racked with rheumatism. But he must get to camp before he could rest; and his indomitable will forced the rusty joints to bend. By and by weakness would overcome the resolution of his fierce Kurdish nature. "Only a few moments," he would say; "it is not a shame to rest a few moments." And so the old man with the snow-white beard, with shaking hands, and with a face marked by savageries long forgotten, sits by the wayside, looking up the trail now and then, if perchance some one might appear to whom

he could call for help. Then he leans to one side, crouches, lies prone, his red and blue turban rolling away beyond his reach. His son and his servants had forgotten him; so it was that Hemze found him—dead.

For Osman, Selim felt unlimited contempt. He said to himself, "Osman knows neither Moses nor Jesus, but only himself." He thirsted to punish the fellow in some way. But the whole tribe would justify dropping like a decayed peach the old man who is of no use. Would that God would punish this hard-hearted selfishness. Yet how could He? Wrong-doing does not bar from God's favour one who does the regular prayers the required number of times each day.

By the clump of rock-roses an hour was as a few moments to Selim. At length he arose clearly seeing his duty. "Betterment," said he, "cannot spring from such people as ours. Somewhere other believers must have received wisdom from God to know how they ought to behave. I cannot stand hesitating between Try and Give Up. Somewhere there must be those who will not think it wrong for me to seek God's wisdom. I will search until I find."

IV

A CAREER FOR SELIM

HASSAN BEY, like a good many other narrow men, was sure that his field of vision was as broad as the universe. This fitted him to charge one who differed from him with views of life taken by peeps through a half-inch slit in a massive wall. Being old and wise he could fairly ascribe such narrowness to his son, for Selim was young and foolish.

The chief was not quite free from the sluggishness that avoids discussion which calls for alertness of mind. A child who is by birthright a propounder of puzzles asks his father a great question. He says, "When you put a bean in the ground why does it always grow beans? Why doesn't it sometimes grow peas or pansies?" The father may conscientiously expound the mysteries of the transmission of life. But the chances are that he will say, "Because it can't do anything else. Don't ask foolish questions." This sort of indolence was part of Hassan

Bey's lack of sympathy with Selim's habit of inquiry.

Hassan Bey also believed that original thinking fostered mental pride, and pride begot headlong obstinacy in action. Such thinking, that easily slipped from safe ruts, should be restrained as unruly and dangerous.

But a weightier reason why the chief snubbed Selim whenever he had a glimpse of the boy's mind was the religious reason. From Hassan Bey's point of view Mohammed was sent from God to give men the essence of all the truths ever spoken. The problems of life, simple or complex, can be solved by Mohammed alone. Proper topics for thought and discussion are those presented in the Koran and the comments of its earliest interpreters. If an idea is not dealt with by Mohammed, it would be blasphemy to infer that his mind did not canvass it. The reason lies in the idea itself; it was harmful, or at best useless. The Koran and its inspired commentators have fixed for all time the answer to every candid question.

An average man, pressing a claim before a judge, would be paralyzed by a request to name in detail the laws on which his claim is based. On the same principle the Muslim who discusses any theme whatever encoun-

ters deaf ears unless he quotes the actual words of the Koran that authorize his contention. Selim could bring no quotation from the Koran to justify his restless desire to learn more than was taught by his natural tutors. For this reason also his father was bound to extirpate his son's free-thinking habit.

One evening after the end of the Ramazan fast Hassan Bey summoned the young man to the reception-room of the great tent. A rigid discipline had taught Selim the behaviour expected of him in that place. Accordingly he took a posture of deep respect on the rich rug before the old chief. This posture is quite impossible to a person of Western habits. It involves the strange feat of kneeling and sitting on one's heels at the same time.

After formal salutations, Hassan Bey said in a grave but kindly tone:

"My lamb, I am told that after Mulla Mehmed had preached the other day upon the mansions of Paradise you were heard to say that you would not care to live in such a place. They call you a Free-thinker and expect novelties from you, but such words scandalize the faithful. Did you say this thing, or is the story old wives' talk?"

"Father, did you hear what Mulla Mehmed said about the mansions of Paradise?"

"This is not a matter of 'He said this,' and 'The other said that,' like a shepherd's evening yarn. Did you say this thing which has set the Mikaeli clan on fire?"

"I will tell you what I said. Mulla Mehmed described the tree of life which grows in Paradise and every month bears all manner of fruit. His words made one's mouth water."

"Good for you, Selim! I swore you did not say it."

"Let me finish with Mulla Mehmed. He then went on to explain the bigness of the tree, since every one in Paradise has a right to eat from it. He said that the length of each leaf is a day's journey and the shade of the tree is refreshing as a mountain snow pit in hot summer. By and by he got around to speaking of the mansions of the blest of which we shall each have one. According to him, the water of life flows through every room. In every mansion is a bough of the tree of life with abundance of fruit for every taste. When the old Mulla said that, I whispered to Suleiman at my side, 'The bough that enters each mansion must have at least two or three leaves, each of them as long as a day's journey! I would rather live

Hassan Bey and Suleiman

outdoors!' Suleiman gave that queer snoring snort by which the black dervish from the Soudan used to show that he was displeased. When the idea soaked in, he laughed to split. Of course he had to tell every one who asked what he was laughing at, and so I slipped away. You would have felt just as I did, father."

Hassan Bey coughed rather convulsively. "Well," he said, "the Mulla has to talk that way for the common people. Their skulls are so thick that one needs a club to get an idea into their heads. The leaves as long as a day's journey are the club that drives into their heads some notion of the wonders of Paradise. You who have holes in your ears do not need such help."

"When a man is preaching," said Selim, "he ought not to say things without root or branch. He ought to tell people things that will help them, not how big he thinks the tree of life must be since it has to supply all creation."

"The preacher's wisdom is not very great," answered the chief. "It does not flow, but it drops, and that is something. You have a box full of questions. What I say is, Don't open the box. You will have bad things said, and somebody may put a melon rind under

your foot. Don't worry about these things. However crooked the chimney the smoke comes out straight."

"I am not worrying," said Selim. "I am only troubled because people blame me for wanting to learn the science of living. One does little things carelessly which by and by turn out to be big things and wrong. I want to grow to be a manly man, too well taught to fall into such mistakes."

"Have you not had me to teach you? Be strong, be manly. That is all there is to it. I want every Kurd to tremble when you look at him. Watch over the growth of the flocks; use your mind to keep hold of the pasturage and the trail that belongs to our clan, and to get as much more as you can. But do not meddle with religion. That is fixed by the words and the conduct of the prophet whose name be glorified. To meddle with religion is to weaken its hold on the people, and to help on the corruption that seeps into human nature as more and more years separate us from the blessed time of the prophet's life."

"Yes, I know that," admitted Selim, "but what I want is to learn how to be rid of my bad habits, and which habits are bad."

"You know, Selim," said Hassan Bey

earnestly, "that I do not want you to be like a donkey's tail, which grows neither longer nor shorter. But as to habits, every man is as God made him. Even a man who is like a horse-fly that lives under the tail has his habits in his blood; until life leaves the blood the habits cannot get out of the body. The rules of the prophet are to be carefully kept—how to declare your belief in God, how to wash your face and hands and feet, how to brush your teeth, how to worship, how to keep the fast, and all the rest. God is boundless in compassion to all who keep these rules. It is impossible to be better than this. You must not rebuke God for making you what you are. You would not really wish to learn to be like those Christians from Europe who shrink from being seen at prayer, who try to hide their faces from the Almighty by putting brims to their hats, and who wear shamelessly tight clothes?"

"Certainly not," agreed Selim. "But why does worshipping God always make me feel mean? How can one escape from feeling mean unless he knows how God wants him to act after he has worshipped? The burden on my heart is to know this."

"Selim," said his father sharply, "the novelties in your mind are from the devil.

All ideas that can properly spin around in the minds of Muslims, the fathers have sifted out and have put in their books of precious pearls of thought. Take them and be thankful that God has shown you so easy a religion. If you persist in thinking other thoughts, my opposition will always rise before you like a wall. Leave your waywardness, and accept what is taught you, and be at peace as I am."

"Father," replied Selim, "I do accept what is taught me. Nothing comes down from heaven that the earth will not receive. But there must be more for me to learn."

"Enough of that! I did hope when you went to the seminary that you would come out a master of the Holy Law with a turban as big as a bushel. But you have got mixed on the points of the compass and your tongue wags too much. The clan will not respect you until you have done something more than dream. I have decided to send you to Persia to our cousin Ben Shammar of the Keshkivend clan. He will teach your eye to see and your hand to hold, and will not leave you time for fretting your soul."

Selim's face grew pale "Ben Shammar," he said, "is cruel as a tiger. When he was here last summer he told me about the raid upon that village near Yezd for which the

Persians tried to arrest him. With three hundred horsemen he dashed into the village like a cloud-burst when everybody was asleep. They killed two or three who tried to resist, beat others black and blue to keep them quiet, thrust aside the shrieking women and squalling children, and then carried off everything worth taking except the girls, whom they left only because their beasts were loaded with more valuable loot. Ben Shammar was proud of the raid, although he had to give nearly half of what he got to the Persian officials who shut their eyes and their ears until he could get away. I asked Ben Shammar whether he does not fear God. He looked at me for a moment with fiery eyes. Then he calmed down and said, 'Of course I fear God. It is by His favour that I succeed.' I said, 'Perhaps God's favour would help you succeed in some other trade,' but Ben Shammar answered, 'I cannot take another trade. This is our heritage.' No, father," continued Selim, "do not ask me to become a robber."

Hassan Bey was one of those men whose gauge of right is largely fixed in a domineering will. Was he not head of his house, and chief of his clan? So when Selim said, "Do not ask me to become a robber," he struck a blow at that iron will. A change came over

the father's face which startled the son. The cheeks were red, the eyes glaring, the lips rigid but showing the teeth clenched behind them. More startling to the young man, however, than that angry face was the even, controlled tone in which Hassan Bey spoke. "Selim," he said, "it is I who have laboured by day and by night to make a man of you. It has taken many ovenfuls of bread to bring you to what you are; you shall now do as I say. When we move to the plains for the winter you shall not go with us. You shall go to Ben Shammar and learn the trade of the Keshkivend clan. Better be killed by the Persians like a man, rifle in hand, than be butchered like a sheep by your clansmen for scoffing at religion. Now leave me."

Selim arose without a word and, Oriental fashion, bowed profoundly as he moved backward out of the tent. He went in by the side door to the little room partitioned off for his bed. Throwing himself down he tried to measure the crisis before him. His father's command was laid upon him in the name of religion. But he could not obey the command to join Ben Shammar's band of robber Kurds. He did not blame his father who did not understand him, much less did he find fault with the religion of Islam. No

more did Luther find fault with Christianity when he began his revolt against some of the Roman clergy. The point in this case was that Muslim teachers seemed not to know religion fully. Selim's purpose to seek light clashed with his father's determination that he should not. Hence unless he made abject submission he must leave the camp as a rebel and an outcast.

Selim thought of appealing to his mother as mediator. She would sympathize with him; but on the other hand she would urge him not to venture to refuse obedience to the chief. It was long after all in the tent were asleep that the young man perceived that these terrible questions could wait until the time approached for breaking camp for the winter. "My affairs now rest with God alone," he said. So he laid his trouble down for a few moments at least, when he prayed, "Lord, Thou knowest I do not scoff at religion. I believe in Thee and in Mohammed whom Thou hast sent. Guide me in the straight way, the way of those to whom Thou art gracious."

V

SELIM WINS

SELIM'S impulse to ask his mother to help him in the contest of will with Hassan Bey was a fruit of observation and experience. Mohammedan women lack many characteristics which make women in Western lands interesting and influential. They live in veiled isolation while men direct the universe; they shamelessly admit that woman's brain is feeble; they are ignorant of everything outside of their little circle; they are stupid (though not more so than some of our humorous writers would fain prove their own lady friends to be in business matters), and they are narrow-minded and bigoted to the last degree. Nevertheless, they find means of absorbing the attention and controlling the services of the men. A girl of fifteen may fail to rule a husband of fifty. But in mature life the Mohammedan woman is as she commonly appears in Oriental literature, as full of strategy as a generalissimo. Among the Kurdish Mohammedans

an elderly lady commonly directs her own life and that of her husband as well, because she is worthy and is truly interesting.

Such was Fatima, the first of the Kurdish chief's three wives and the noble-born mother of Selim. Full of dignity and pride of birth, she was also quite the equal in tact and resource of that astute and hard-hearted politician, Hassan Bey. Moreover, her motherly heart was for her son a throne-room.

After Hassan Bey had dismissed Selim to bitter reflections upon his decree of banishment, he quickly carried the news of the crisis to Fatima. She asked in amazement, "What has Selim done that you should send him to live among those pigs of Persians?"

"The good that he does to us," replied the chief, "is not worth the frogs that he scares away. He is saying things about religion that will not go down with our people. His ideas show discontent with our ways, our worship, and the belief fixed forever by our glorious prophet. He wants us to improve ourselves; and he will not submit to my direction. He thinks night and day. Thinking to him is what chewing the cud is to a cow; he is so full of ideas that soon his skin won't hold him. To make him change is like making a camel jump a ditch. We

have got to tie a stone to his feet to balance his head."

Fatima heard, but she sat musing in silence. At last, as the chief began to think her silence ominous, she said, "If we were to get him a nice girl she would stop all that far more surely than Ben Shammar can."

Hassan Bey stared at his wife. "I never thought of that," he said; "you are wise as a serpent. You have found the way out. If you say so, I'll crawl into a filbert shell. Yes, a girl is the medicine for Selim's distress about being good. But you must make him take the dose."

The next morning Selim came in from a tramp to the woods to see about trapping red-legged partridges. He brought his mother a large bunch of cyclamen.

Fatima said to him, "Selim, you are as dear to me as my two eyes."

"Ah, mother, that is the hardest part of going away."

"The chief told me that he thinks of sending you to the Keshkivend clan in Persia, because our clansmen here are already discussing whether you really believe in religion. An ignorant bigot is Satan's toy. What the chief fears is that some day such a bigot from another clan may feel it his duty to kill you.

Do you really dislike the observances so much that you have lost the check off your tongue?"

"God forbid! No, mother, I worship five times a day; I make up in full measure all the rounds that I ever miss; I do a round or two of worship in the night sometimes to make sure; I fast more than is required; I give alms, and I hope some day to do the pilgrimage. There is no god but God and Mohammed is the prophet of God! All these things I have done from childhood, as you know. If there is anything else, praise God I am ready to do that too.

"What troubles me is that nothing comes of it all. I want to do right but I can't. I tell lies, and I cheat, and I get angry enough to kill, and then I say things so filthy that I have to drink a quart of water to get rid of the taste. Everybody says these things are wrong, but still does them. The excuse they give is that in such a world as ours nothing else can be done. Here is Osman who would spend a whole night searching for one lost sheep, but leaves his own father to die alone on the road and does not care. In our camp our people are always awake to pilfer or to hire some one to rob some other camp for them. Even father wants me to take night

robbery for a trade, that I may be rich. Of course God does not want such things to be done. There must be somebody somewhere who can teach me just what God does want and how to do it. But this place is a place of 'Don't do and Don't find.'"

"Don't worry about little things, my son. By looks and repute you are a man and the son of a man. You are too much alone; so you find much to fret about. The men who have their own tents are comfortable. The reason is they are not alone. The chief is sorry he said you must go to Ben Shammar's tribe. He said to me, 'We can escape this trouble if we make Selim comfortable.' You would like that, wouldn't you, my heart's delight?"

"I shall be glad not to have to go to Persia. They say man is a creature that climbs. I shall be comfortable when I find a way to get up and up and up."

"Well, listen! The chief said, 'We might find Selim a girl,' he said. You see he does not want you to go any more than I do. 'A young, crisp and tender girl would do him good,' he said. 'Let's do it,' he said. You would like that, wouldn't you, my wild lion? I will pick one out for you, with a face beautiful as the fifteen day moon, eyes like a moun-

tain lake, cheeks like new carnations, a body like silver, and the spot behind the ears snow white. With such a girl you could content yourself to stay with the clan—and with your old mother?"

Selim instantly saw before his eyes the girl whom he would like his mother to choose for him. She was Ayesha of the Hekri clan, whom he had seen two years before near Suleimaniye when he was getting oak galls in the woods to sell for relish-money to help his dry bread go down. She was a shyly smiling girl of twelve or thirteen standing on the grassy bank of a brook, hesitating while her father, holding a loaded donkey on the other side, was calling to her to come across on the stepping-stones. Her distress was so real that Selim took her up in his arms and carried her to the other side. She said not a word, her father making all needful acknowledgments. But her fiery cheeks, the light in her eyes and the smile on her lips as Selim ran back to his own side of the stream were things to remember.

Selim did not know, and his mother did not perceive clearly, the elements of the plan presented to him. What Fatima proposed was to occupy her son's mind with something that would smother aspiration, leaving his

soul to starve, content with the current form of godliness. As for Selim, he recalled the proverb "At fifteen a girl should be married or buried."—Little Ayesha was now marriageable. But to marry would be to turn aside from his quest. So he said:

"Mother, I wish you could look into my heart and see it throb when you plan happiness for me. You always make me happy. But the time for me to marry has not come. First I must learn to be a man. Something within me pricks my heart if I begin to forget. If father will let me go back to the seminary at Suleimaniye, perhaps I may find some one there who can teach me."

"Yes," said his mother, "they will teach you to sit in a corner and think; they will make you think of yourself, whether you possibly stepped on an ant when you walked, or killed a weed that God planted, or cracked a rock that God intended to stay uncracked till the judgment day. They will make you fast until you can't laugh because you have become a skeleton with two bones for legs. You will not be my Selim but the Suleimaniye Sheikh's Selim—like nothing on earth but a dry tree!"

"Mother, I will be your Selim wherever I go. But I must find a guide to teach me

how to get near to God. When I find out what God wants of me I shall do it; and I shall be happy wherever you are. Until I find a perfect guide to the knowledge of God I cannot rest."

"You break my heart, Selim. I am sure that a girl would be better than a guide for you. But you were always stubborn in wanting your own way. If you want a guide, why not go to Sheikh Abdullah, the head of the seminary at Kerkuk. They call him a perfect guide to the knowledge of God. He is not like the Suleimaniye Sheikh, but is fat and jolly. He is a great man among the Nakishbendi Dervishes, who do great wonders, they say, through the knowledge of God. If you really wish it, I am sure I can coax your father to let you go to Kerkuk. The Sheikh is sister's son to my mother and will care for you for my sake."

So Fatima's strategy turned aside the danger of losing her son through Hassan Bey's hasty decision to send him to Persia. With this partial success she was satisfied. Hassan Bey was vaguely conscious that his wife's compromise had somehow checkmated him. Nevertheless, he reflected that at Kerkuk Selim would be led into the Nakishbendi order of dervishes, and that would assure his

respectability by permanently ending his free-thinking. Hence like any other good husband in similar circumstances he decided to be satisfied. As for Selim, some perfect guide to the knowledge of God was all that he wished. He wondered that the remedy for his troubles was so simple and easy ; but he too was satisfied ; and calm reigned in the six-poled tent.

A few weeks later Selim kissed his mother, kissed his father's hand and received his blessing. Then with Suleiman for his companion, he rode away from the camp on the plateau.

Selim and Suleiman were cordially met at the gate of the seminary by a student. He asked no questions, led them to a clean little room with a grape-vine trained over an arbour about the door, and bade them make themselves at home. When Selim's simple belongings had been laid in order and his rug spread on the floor, the student brought in a porous earthen jug full of water. Then once more assuring the visitors of their welcome he left them to use the room as their own. After Suleiman had taken the horses to a khan near by, and had grumbled with his snoring snort at the poor accommodations, the two men chatted at ease until the student

returned with a wooden tray loaded with good but plain food. Politely wishing them a good appetite, he left them once more to themselves. It might disturb the tranquillity of a newly arrived guest to ask his name or his business. The chief token of the welcome ready for unknown travellers in those regions is the pains taken to offer them unvexed rest.

Towards evening Suleiman went away. He was a man of few words, but he was devoted to Selim, whom he had cared for from his first walk abroad. In parting from him now he gave the young man a bit of advice. "I like this place," he said, "and the people seem well-meaning. Yet one can never be too careful about trusting to appearances. Keep your eyes open, and bear in mind the safe rule: When hunting do not give thanks until you have eaten up the woodcock."

Selim loaded him with messages for the lady Fatima, for the chief, and for others in the camp. Long before daybreak the old Kurd would set out on his journey back to the tents. It was only when Suleiman was going out of the courtyard that a student asked him if he had travelled far that day, and thus unobtrusively learned the name and fame of Selim and his wish to become a student in the seminary.

Until Selim was pleased to open the subject himself the next day, nothing was said to him about his purpose. When he asked if he could pay his respects to Sheikh Abdullah he was taken to the genial old man, and was warmly greeted as a kinsman. Sheikh Abdullah seemed sincere in his expressions of pleasure at this addition to the corps of students. "You will be a son to me," he said, "and will make my rooms your home."

Selim recognized this as a high honour. It was the first sweet fruits of his hard won liberty to follow his bent. It would involve sweeping the rooms and acting as a sort of valet to the great man; but it would include an intimacy that he felt to be precious, since the Sheikh was very holy. He moved his light baggage into the cell on the cloistered court which was assigned to him and thanked God that he had been allowed to become a student in the seminary at Kerkuk, when he had expected to be an outcast from the plateau of the Kurd's Bed.

VI

THE NAKISHBENDI DERVISHES

IN every land different ways of attaining knowledge of God commend themselves to groping seekers. So it comes to pass that there are many "ways" among the dervishes. Some of them choose the ascetic path, trying to silence the clamours of the flesh by main force. Some would shut out the world during their spiritual exercises by whirling like tops. Some, it is said, use liquor or drugs when the weekly assemblage brings them together to satisfy the soul's craving for God. Some work themselves into a frenzy, shouting the words *La illaha il' Allah* (There is no god but God) until the words become inarticulate howls or grunts and the howlers lose consciousness in the overwhelming presence of the Almighty.

Whatever the means used each order of dervishes seeks a vacuum of the mind which they call annihilation of self, that the soul may feel the ecstasy of God's presence.

The Nakishbendi Dervishes seek God in silence. During their strenuous mental ex-

ercises vivid colours appear before their closed eyes, symbolizing harmony of the body with the divine being. Their name " Painter Dervishes " emphasizes the importance which they give to these colours.

Selim was a Mohammedan just as he was a Kurd. He was born so. He believed in the religion heartily; he felt the truth in its conception of God, and as all religious men, so far as he knew, are ready to die for their faith, and to kill any one who blasphemes God by blatant belief in any teacher other than Mohammed, he, too, was ready to fight for his faith. But the people whom he met, while eager to kill or be killed for the faith, were listless in trying to be what the people of God should be in the commonplace every-day life. He was sure that to know more about God would calm his impatience of evil. So he petitioned to be received as a novice into the Nakishbendi Order.

Sheikh Abdullah replied, " This is a very great undertaking. Think well first, for it leads to annihilation. Expect and ask guidance by a dream. I also will await a dream. Then we shall know whether it is well for you to join the Painter Dervishes."

Such a test aroused curiosity; but intense curiosity nearly drove away sleep, without

which there are no supernatural dreams. At last Selim dozed and dreamed. A benign old man dressed in a quilted jacket, and wearing a great turban, sat on a sheepskin on the floor of a spacious room. Before this venerable personage Selim did reverence, whereupon the old man motioned him to sit by his side on the sheepskin. Then Selim awoke in abiding joy.

Sheikh Abdullah too dreamed. He said to Selim, "I dreamed that I saw a Sheikh sitting in a circle of dervishes. As I looked, behold the Sheikh was none other than yourself! We may take up this blessed course together. God," continued the Sheikh, "is the natural refuge for the soul of man. The soul comes from God. To know God is the one thing desirable in life. The abilities of man are many; the ways in which he can seek knowledge of God are many. But all sincere seekers are brethren, for all the ways in which they walk lead to God."

Sheikh Abdullah then knelt on one of the sheepskins on the floor and had Selim kneel on another facing him, his knees touching the Sheikh's knees. "Now," said he, "think of one thing only; put away all other thoughts, and think of my heart. At the same time I will fix my thoughts on your

heart." So the Sheikh bent forward touching his forehead to Selim's forehead. They remained silent in that position for ten minutes or more. Selim trembled; his effort was great to fix his thoughts on the heart of the Sheikh, but he fancied that he could feel the pressure, warm and vigorous, of the Sheikh's thought on his brain. Sweat poured from every pore of his body.

After ten or fifteen minutes the Sheikh raised his head from its contact with Selim. Then he took Selim's right hand in his and said, "These be the words of the covenant of the brethren: You will perform the ablutions prescribed by the Koran; you will do the regular services of worship daily; you will make good past neglect in worship or in fasts; you will refrain from falsehood, from tale-bearing or calumny; you will hold malice towards none, and you will pray for forgiveness of sin in the name of Mohammed the great mediator of the last day. You have chosen me to be your guide, and you will obey without question every command that I give. Do you covenant to do these things?"

In sheer joy at having at last found a perfect guide, Selim said, "Amen."

"Now, my son," said the Sheikh, "you have joined our order as a novice. It is for

you daily to go forward. I am to lead you; your being is to become annihilated in mine. Every day you must work to this end. Select a convenient time and a private place. Having done the ablutions, kneel facing Mecca, pray God to forgive your sins, and then during half an hour, or an hour if you can, force your thoughts to imagine your heart by the side of my heart in order to acquire grace. On Thursday you will join the circle of the brethren and silently repeat, 'There is no god but God.' Then or at other times I will aid you, as I do all the others, by the touch of my forehead to yours. After a few days you will find yourself naturally picturing your being as entirely absorbed in mine, so that you can no longer exist separate from your guide. From that hour, no matter what you do, you will feel my hand touching yours and my eye seeing whatever you do. Go in peace, my son, and may God help your seeking."

The Sheikh called Selim back to strengthen his faith. "Whatever believing man or believing woman," he said, "seeks the mercies and limitless gifts of God, with love and fidelity, God forbid that the Lord, the giver of gifts, should leave such a one without the guidance which he needs." The truth of this

comforting thought carried with it to Selim's mind conviction of the rare piety of the Sheikh.

After the studies and lectures of the day, full of zeal to make the most of the directions of so perfect a guide, Selim gave an hour each afternoon to his exercise in self-control. At first, ten minutes seemed too long a time. His thoughts were filled with pictures of the camp on the mountain plateau, of the ewes at the milking, of his last interview with his mother. He was sorry that he had resolved on using a whole hour in the task. But his honest desire for knowledge of God spurred his resolution. After ten days he was able to tell the Sheikh that during this exercise the self-conscious Selim was annihilated. The Sheikh was all in all.

"Good," said Sheikh Abdullah; "you have taken the first step. Now try to lose yourself in the being of the holy prophet Mohammed. Take at least an hour to each exercise and let me know how you prosper."

The day's work, the sweeping, the scullion tasks in the kitchen, the carrying food and water, the studies in Arabic syntax and the lessons in intoning the Koran, became to Selim mere incidents of life. His essential life was the hour spent before the vesper worship each afternoon when with grim de-

termination he tried to fix his thoughts upon the person of Mohammed, the mediator between God and man. A sort of ecstasy filled Selim's heart when after two weeks he seemed to be lost in the vision of the person of the prophet. He heartily praised God.

When he reported his progress to Sheikh Abdullah, his guide said, "You are already a dervish, my son, for you put love into it. Sheikh Omar will help you in the next stage, which is hard. You have now to restore your body to its right relations to God."

Sheikh Omar was a young man with a thin ascetic face whose pallor was in sharp contrast to his intensely black beard, and whose eyes blazed as with electricity. Selim learned from him to turn his thoughts and his eyes upon his own heart, described to him as a conical object two inches below his left breast. To bring it into its original sensitiveness, the dervish must sit on his heels while kneeling, without motion. While Sheikh Omar knelt in front of him, aiding by silent prayer, Selim had to hold his breath as much as possible, turning his tongue back upon his palate. In this posture he was required to repeat the name of God (Allah) three thousand times in his very heart. His heart must say "Allah" for him.

After a time Sheikh Omar said in a low voice, "Tell me when you see it, but go on until you do."

Selim went on, his blood throbbing in his ears from the effort to do without breathing. He recognized the voice of his heart, saying Al-lah, Al-lah, and he was glad. Then all at once he said, "I see something like a cone all red!"

Sheikh Omar with his two hands gently raised Selim's bent head and said, "It is enough; your heart is right. Now rest before the call to worship."

Trembling and bewildered Selim rose to his feet. A strange, triumphant feeling filled his heart. He had never known such joy in religion. He was truly being prepared for the knowledge of God!

After some weeks of hard work Selim began to see for himself why this order is called the "Painter Dervishes." His repetitions of the name of God had been increased to six thousand at a sitting, and he could see a whole gamut of colours before his closed eyes. These colours, he was told, each answered to one function or part of his inward nature. When that part of his nature was brought under control of the Creator the colour blazed forth. As if the Holy Name

which he recited was a calling of the roll of his faculties, his soul, his mind, his conscience, and so on, responded by the appropriate colour to the name of God. Each faculty was ready and obedient. Selim, thrilled by this experience, now saw that he was on the way to unlimited revelations.

Intimate association with so celebrated a divine as Sheikh Abdullah, a strange sense of self-subjugation produced by success in using the theosophical exercises, and the inspiring service on Thursday in the circle of the whole brotherhood made Selim a new man. His being, aroused from torpor, recognized its source. His soul ardently longed for still nearer approach to God. He was more content with himself than ever before.

One day Sheikh Abdullah came to Selim at the hour for contemplation. He said, "You have now to make a great step forward. There is none existent besides God, and you have to learn this. Hereafter say *La ilaha il' Allah* (There is no god but God) as you strive to incline your heart to Him."

Then the Sheikh knelt in front of Selim as before, knee touching knee and forehead touching forehead. "Fill your lungs," he said, "keep your lips shut, turn your tongue

back upon your palate and try to say these words of the unity of God three times before releasing your breath. Each time at the word '*la*' think all things, even yourself, annihilated. At '*ilah*' think there is naught but God. At the word '*il*' *Allah*' remember that God is. Then as you release your breath repeat the words 'Mohammed is the prophet of God.' As you draw in a new breath pray with all your heart, 'I seek Thee, O God ; Thy favour I desire.' Make twenty-one breathings in this way."

Sitting in solemn silence Selim accomplished the twenty-one breathings, the Sheikh's forehead resting upon his during the whole time. He felt transported beyond himself. Every nerve was throbbing, every muscle tense. But nothing happened!

"Try it again," said the patient Sheikh. "This time make sure that your mind and heart are fixed in the desire for God's presence. Try to say the declaration of the unity seven times with each breath."

Selim obeyed, the Sheikh with deep inward struggle seeking to influence his thought while resting his forehead on that of his neophyte. After a time Selim seemed to see himself enveloped in light from head to foot. He fell prostrate on the ground muttering,

"Oh, my God!" and became unconscious from very excess of joy.

Very gently the Sheikh disengaged himself from the prostrate body and rose to his feet wiping beads of perspiration from his face. He looked as one could imagine the witch of Endor looked when her incantations brought Samuel from the grave.

Long he talked with Selim of the result of following regularly these practices. The seeker begins to see that he has no separate thought of his own because of the Presence; he merely interprets God. Then he will recognize every sound of bird or beast as from God. Finally there will come a time when, shaken as by an earthquake, he will seem to be annihilated. There will be no rocks, no trees, no mountains, no sea, all will be God, in whom all live and move. "You can now go on by yourself," said the Sheikh, "with occasional aid from Sheikh Omar and myself. Unutterable things are before you, if with a sincere heart you practice every day as much as possible. You will find in time that, whatever you do, God is in it. In all places you will be with God. All that is will be obedient to you for God's sake. You will teach men and they will become wise because in your words God speaks. Whether you

heal or whether with a glance you kill, all your acts will show that you abide in the ocean of the being of God. Let this be your aim since now you know the way."

Selim was intoxicated. He had never dreamed of such attainments resulting from drawing near to God. His humble wish had been to learn from his God some gauge of conduct, some signal of danger which he would loyally know and obey afar off; but through these thrilling exercises would be revealed to him the presence of God actually filling his soul and shaping his acts without anxiety and without conscious effort of his own. By compelling his mind to shut out everything but the glorious name of God, whatever he did would be well directed and beyond blame. His name, Selim, means Safe. He was indeed safe; he had within reach the most priceless possession which mind can imagine.

VII

THE PERFECT GUIDE

NOTWITHSTANDING the exaltation of soul which sprang from the exercises of the contemplation of God, Selim at times descended from the heights to prosaic study of his inward state. Sheikh Abdullah had assured him that his thoughts, words and acts would all be seen to come from God. Yet the delights of the contemplation brought Selim in the classes no tastes and feelings that he could call godly. He had reached no stable heights of nobility; he had felt no warm regard for his brothers, the other students; he was vexed and angered as readily as before; a dull irritability was the background on which he scored the peculiarities and defects of his comrades. Bitter scorn entered his thoughts as he perceived a long nose or expansive ears, and he hated their possessor. He was no longer a reckless free-thinker; blind obedience to Sheikh Abdullah had ended that. Yet some of his thoughts the Sheikh would certainly disapprove. From the exercises

that the Sheikh had taught him sprang ecstasy in the conviction that God is, but in fact he had to admit these exercises were merely new forms of worship and adoration. They did not teach him to hear the voice of God directing his conduct. Without being able to analyze his feelings, Selim longed for the bond to the Eternal which is called religion, and which craves response when the pious soul offers worship. Questions of right, which he had thought fully answered, harassed him in the hours when he was not actually ravished by the exercises of the "way."

Salih, one of the older students with whom he often talked, openly derided his expectation of manly growth through obedience to the Sheikh as a perfect guide.

"All these exercises are physical," he said. "They tickle the flesh and leave the soul as it was. My poor Selim, you waste your time. You hold your breath to make your heart say Allah, first making ablution and facing towards Mecca. Turn your back on Mecca and without making ablution hold your breath long enough, and your heart will beat 'rub-dub rub-dub' in your ears just the same. Your heart does not say Allah. It says just what the heart of a naked African

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pagan's heart says, if he holds his breath. I have tried one order of dervishes after another, the gasping Kadiris, the whirling Mevlevis, the howling Rufayis, the Behais who prate of love to all but practice it not. They all say they have a way to find joy in God. What they find is no more nor less than that which Omar Khayyam found in dealing with these same wise ones:

"'Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint and heard great argument
About it and about; but ever more
Came out by the same door as in I went.'"

Selim and Salih, attracted to each other by a common habit of daring to think for themselves, differed as widely in the tendency of their thought as though they had been conscious followers of two opposing theories of religion. Both being Mohammedans by inheritance they neither knew nor wished to know any other religion. A Muslim who looks into another religion even for comparison breaks the law of Mohammed that says to him "Believe or die."

Salih accepted all this as one accepts disagreeable weather, without thought of rebellion. He daily uttered his profession of faith with no more power than a parrot to defend it, and with no criticism of its meagreness.

He pursued his sacred studies not because they were precious or sacred, but because as a teacher, a preacher, a lawyer or a judge, he could some day gain from them support and ease.

Selim, on the other hand, used the profession of faith and the words of worship as the expression of his veneration for God. But something essential was lacking. An aspiration for spiritual realities like a voice of command dominated his heart. The words of Job, of whose struggles he had never heard, would express the yearning of his soul,—"Oh, that I knew where I might find Him." If he yielded to Salih's suggestions his scheme of values in life would hopelessly collapse.

Salih advised him, like one who knows, to stop vain seeking after a distant God who cannot be found. "Drop the whole wretched business," he said. "Look out for yourself. You like mysteries, learn astrology. It will pay you in renown as well as in gold. Mirza Rustem of Bijur in Persia knows every star as he knows his brother. Although he is a Fire-worshipping pagan, Muslim students from all the land go to him to learn astronomy and astrology that they may benefit their own people by his science."

"No," said Selim, "your advice is like telling a man to turn up his trousers before he reaches the river. I am going to follow my leader to the end. Obedience and faith are absolute and reasonable conditions of attainment —— Why! what was that?"

Both the young men silently listened a moment; both had heard a faint rustle as of the swishing of a gown. Yet it was late and no one would be likely to walk the dark cloister at that hour. Salih arose and quietly stepped to the open door. Nothing was to be seen, but the possibility that some one had been listening to his outspoken expression made him uneasy.

"Is there any one in this place," he asked Selim, "who would try to search our hearts?"

"Why should any one spy on us?" answered Selim; "there is no police here and we are not conspirators."

Two days later the students were listening to a lecture from Sheikh Abdullah on some intricate problems of the Canon Law on inheritance. They were seated, as usual, cross-legged on sheepskins placed on the floor in rows which formed a semicircle in front of the raised dais on which the old Sheikh sat among his cushions. All were closely following the illustrations of the lecturer who

needed profound knowledge of casuistry in that field to satisfy active minds of the eternal justice of the Koran.

A little in front of Selim, Salih was sitting with Sheikh Omar close to him on his left. As if to relieve a cramped position Sheikh Omar extended his arm behind the back of Salih. The movement attracted Selim's eyes for an instant, but the lecturer's arguments absorbed his attention. Suddenly Salih gave a gasping cry. Selim saw Sheikh Omar's arm withdrawn and in the wide sleeve something sparkled for a moment, long and slender like a packing needle. As all eyes were turned towards Salih, they saw him slowly sink sidewise to the floor. Instantly Sheikh Omar embraced the prostrate form, saying, "What is it, brother? What has happened?"

The students sprang to their feet and crowded around. But first of all Sheikh Abdullah was at the side of Salih, and as he began to chafe the poor fellow's hands, he cried, "Bring water quickly!"

They sprinkled Salih's face, tried to make him drink, and finally by Sheikh Abdullah's orders Omar and two or three others carried Salih to the Sheikh's own room. As they lifted him, Selim saw a small red spot on the

floor, and saw Sheikh Omar deftly cover it with the edge of a sheepskin in the fleece of which his fingers became entangled as he lifted the unconscious form. Our thoughts rule us when they come in orderly and harmonious succession. Selim's thoughts came as a mob when there is no police. They clamoured at several sides of his brain at once, and they held him dazed, with open mouth and staring eyes, while the rest of the students flocked to the door through which Salih had been carried.

Sheikh Abdullah in a low, even voice ordered all but Omar to leave the room, where the two remained to care for Salih. After a short time Sheikh Omar came out, closing the door behind him, and said to the students :

"May you never be less! Our brother Salih has been smitten by apoplexy and has passed to the mercy of God. May God rest his soul!"

"May God give him peace!" answered the students in solemn chorus.

Shortly afterwards Sheikh Abdullah came to the door and calling Selim with a gesture, said, "Go to the Government House and get a permit to bury Salih. Say he died of apoplexy. Of course it is not fair to our brother to delay the burial over night, and the day is

far spent. Give the clerk these two dollars for his trouble and come back quickly."

Selim was still numb from the clash of the testimony of his eyes that had seen, of his heart that lovingly trusted his guide, and of his intellect which interpreted that motion of Sheikh Omar's arm the moment before Salih fell. He answered:

"It is for you to choose by whom you will send; let it not seem an offense to you that I would excuse myself from going out so soon."

Sheikh Abdullah looked keenly at Selim, and said to him, "Are you so moved by what God has done? Stay and pray that all sin may be forgiven our brother. A sudden death atones for much." Then he sent another student for the burial permit.

All things were done decently and in order. Sheikh Abdullah and Omar so loved Salih that with their own hands they washed the body in canonical form, wound it in the burial sheet, and placed it in the bier covered with green cloth and Persian shawls, and with tender care they arranged the white turban of the dead upon the upright at the head of the bier.

The Imam of the neighbouring mosque led the prayers of burial and then the whole body

of students took turns in carrying the bier on their shoulders to the grave. The members of the dervish fraternity in two long files preceded the body through the narrow streets solemnly chanting *La ilaha il' Allah.* And so they laid away poor Salih.

That night brought a succession of horrors to Selim. Salih was gone, smitten by a brutal hand because some one had overheard his sneer at the sacred rites of the seekers. What remained? What manner of man was the Sheikh, that perfect guide? He had aided, perhaps planned the murder. In either case he was a liar and in the eyes of God an accursed hypocrite. The whole delightful tissue of hopes and satisfied longings which had been woven about the piety of that white-haired, genial old man was as filthy rags! Selim could not face Sheikh Abdullah again. As for Omar, the deceitful assassin, Selim's only question was whether it was right to leave the seminary without first killing him.

For he must leave the seminary at once. He ought to go to the Government House and denounce the crime. But where were his proofs? The whole body of students would testify that his story was a dream of a shadow, without ground or substance. Or if

some believed the accusation, Sheikh Abdullah had only to explain that Salih had blasphemed God and religion in such terms that duty to God required every pious man to kill him. The judges and the governor would need no further inquest. The sense of duty to religion would make the civil powers a grinding millstone to crush any man who in such a case should lay a charge of crime against the holy Sheikh. Islam tolerates much, but never a loose and irreligious tongue.

Selim had decided to leave the place and at once. Naturally he would go home. Suddenly he reflected that he could not live in silence among his own people. If he spoke, his father, his clan, and even his mother would fly upon him in fury for calumniating the pious Sheikh. There too he would face an outraged Islam. "There is no guide to God in this place," he finally said, "but somewhere there must be." He would go out like Abraham not knowing whither.

The sorely smitten man went in the darkness to the little fountain in the court of the seminary and washed his face, his hands, his feet in strict performance of the sacred ablutions. Then silently he went through four "rounds" of the regular litany of worship,

and prayed again the prayer from the first chapter of the Koran : " Guide me in the way of them to whom Thou art gracious." He had to trust God for direction, or life was vain.

Long before the day began to dawn, Selim took up what few things he must carry in his journey, slid back the heavy wooden bar of the outer courtyard gate, walked quietly through the silent streets, and went out of the city by the northern road towards Khoi Sanjak. He chose that road as least likely to be taken by any one who might be ordered to overtake him. For did not his flight mark him as a suspicious character, perhaps a traitor to the religion of the holy prophet?

Selim's journey had a purpose at its starting point only. As to the goal it was like the way of the hairy caterpillar in a grass plot, shaped only by blind hopes of escape in some direction. At Khoi Sanjak he found himself among Kurds belonging to other clans of the Jaff tribe. These were friendly and hospitable and full of curiosity as to his purpose in visiting that city.

One of the mosque servants whispered a question about him to one of the worshippers : " Who is that young fellow who stands straight like a candle?"

"He must be from one of the clans down Baghdad way; but I know nothing about him."

"Many young fellows are strolling around in these times without rope or handle that one can hold them by. Coming here was his affair, but going away is not his affair until we know whence and where he comes and goes."

Selim was rather panic stricken by the mosque servant's remark. He could not conceal his identity; his speech betrayed his southern origin. He could not tell his story; he would be deemed an enemy of Islam. So he adopted Salih's advice casually dropped in their last discussion. He told his new friends that he was Selim, son of Hassan Bey of the Mikaeli clan, and that by the favour of God he intended to go to Bijur in Persia to study astronomy under Mirza Rustem. This seemed reasonable to the Kurds of Khoi Sanjak and they helped him on his way.

VIII

THE BOOK

NO charlatan astrologer was Mirza Rustem. His forecasts were based on an intimate knowledge of astronomy. He could tell exactly the movements of the stars. He had measured and proved and pictured their spheres rolling around the earth. In his own person he felt the influence of the various houses of the heavens as each in turn became ascendant. Therefore, for any applicant who knew the day and hour of his birth the Mirza with sincere accuracy laid off a horoscope. He asked no money for this service, but accepted whatever token of satisfaction the enlightened inquirer chose to lay at his feet.

Because of his disinterestedness quite as much as because he was old, dignified and wise, the Mirza held the regard and respect of his Mohammedan neighbours. People called him "a scratching post for the herd." Whether in physical pain, in fear of calamity, or in plain perplexity what to do next;

whether about to travel, to marry, or to close a business deal, the common folk used to ask Mirza Rustem to "teach their brains" as they phrased it, and sometimes he taught their consciences too. So in the midst of a small group of other *Mejusis* (Parsis) who paid tribute to the Persians for the privilege of keeping their heads on their shoulders, Mirza Rustem lived peacefully and contentedly in his house at Bijur.

Selim liked the Mirza with that intuitive liking at first sight which invites a long friendship. At the very first Mirza Rustem cast Selim's horoscope, and found that at his birth the house of religion was in the ascendant. This satisfied Selim of the old philosopher's capacity, and made him glad that he had followed that casual impulse to free himself from the questioning of the men of Khoi Sanjak by telling them that he was on his way to Bijur to study astronomy.

The theories of Copernicus and Kepler not having penetrated Persia, Mirza Rustem taught the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. Selim wrote out copious notes of his lessons, and illustrated these notes under his teacher's direction by finely coloured sketches showing the sphere of each planet surrounding the earth as centre of the universe; the several

spheres lying in relation to each other like the layers of an onion and revolving independently as the onion layers do not. After some months of study Selim had learned to cast horoscopes himself. His forecasts of probabilities, having been happily verified in several notable cases, soon began to bring him renown and its shining rewards.

On the approach of spring, however, Selim made ready to go back to his clan. He could not longer avoid this piece of self-denial. Rustem's family was in delightful contrast to his own. Here he had freedom of thought and action ; there he was cramped like a chick in a shell by ingenious devices to prevent his breaking out into the free air. Here he had a worthy sage for a friend whose sympathy fostered every good impulse ; there his people tolerated or encouraged evil practices and suspiciously rebuked impatience with evil ways. With the Muslims of Bijur he had nothing to do since a belt of volcanic activity marks the borders of the peoples who brood over the Persian notion that Ali was the greatest of the Caliphs. In Selim's eyes the Shi'ites were heretics from whom every villainy may be expected, while nothing that he was could be worse than their estimate of him as a Sunnite.

Yet Selim's mind was always alert on questions of personal religion. He still expected somewhere to meet a Muslim wise and good enough to help on the quest from whose painful incidents he now enjoyed a respite. Every day he went through the required forms of worship, and when the fast of Ramazan fell due he observed it rigorously. In fact, like many another sincere and pious Muslim, Selim tried to serve God with fear.

One morning while talking with Mirza Rustem, Selim let his warm regard for his teacher express itself frankly. "Mirza," he said, "our people, whatever their conduct might imply, truly believe in the one God, and there is none else. You have read the Koran, you have many qualities of a Mohammedan, why do you not take on the name? Why does not your intellect drive you from paganism?"

"You call me pagan," replied Mirza Rustem with unusual energy, "and offer me Islam. Let me suggest to you that when a man wishes to fight, it is unwise for him to begin by thrusting his beard in his opponent's face, for he will yell for mercy the next moment. Mohammedans are the pagans of the world. They pray to Mecca—not to God. From the ends of the earth they rush to kiss

the black stone of the Caaba, and seek from it the remission of sins. The central core of their religion is rotten Arabian paganism As for the Koran the truth in it is what your prophet could remember from descriptions of the Bible given him by Jews and Christians. And when he found a vacuum in his memory he filled it with his own ideas of what God might reasonably expect from men. The Koran has value, but it is borrowed at second hand from the limpid stream of truth in the Bible."

Selim was too sincere a believer in Mohammedanism to be free from its characteristic intolerance.

"Stay! Defile your lips with blasphemy no more!" he cried. "We let no man revile the holy book which was created before the world's foundations were laid."

"Do not explode like a squib," said Rustem. "You introduced the subject; now talk quietly and sensibly about it."

"Well," said Selim, "this wonderful Bible has no claim on me."

"It has this claim on you that the Koran does it homage under the name of the *Tourah* (the law), the *Zebour* (the Psalms) and the *Injil* (the Gospel). Stay, I will show it to you."

The Fire-worshipper went to the shelves

filled with the wisdom of Asia in many tongues. He took down a small thick volume in Persian. It was bound in yellowish-brown sheepskin. The corners had worn through, and one of the covers was ready to drop off through the cracking of the dry leather. Mirza Rustem held the book towards Selim, saying, "See, the name describes it: 'The Holy Book.' It is the message of God to past generations. It still has power to blast sin that is rooted in the heart."

Selim frowned at the Mirza's warmth. "Show me," said he, "where it says, 'There is no god but God.' That is the test of its worthiness to be read."

Mirza Rustem turned over a few pages and read, "'The Lord thy God is one God, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' Your prophet has taught you," he added, "the first part of this truth. But he forgot and left out of the Koran the fact that the believing *heart* responds to God as soon as it listens to His messages. As far as you know God you will naturally grow to love him with passion and as this love grows, with it grows knowledge of God. A baby grows to know its mother in the same way. Your prophet shut the door to growth in

your faces by trying like a careless schoolboy to remember what he had heard without understanding, instead of sending clear to Jerusalem, if need be, to get the book itself from which to teach the people."

Selim's anger flared up. "You shall not say such things of the blessed prophet. Remember to whom you are speaking!"

"We sit crooked, Selim, but let us talk straight. I am speaking to a man of open mind, who can bear the truth whatever it be. Because you need this book I have brought it out. Yet you talk as if I had done you a wrong. You know very well that many of your people are fit only to be backlogs in hell. You know they do not love God. They believe in Him as the last desperate resort of one who is crippled and out of the running."

"I know that we all do wrong, but God is compassionate and merciful, for we are frail," said Selim. "Does your book know that?"

"Don't call it my book. It is the book of mankind." Turning over a few pages the Mirza read, "'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me and showing mercy unto thousands of them that

love Me and keep My commandments.' You believe that God is merciful and compassionate and you believe truly. But how can those who shrink from God profit by His mercy and compassion?"

"God forbid! We do not shrink from God. We submissively keep His commandments. We worship Him five times every day. Can you not see that this makes us the people of God?"

"When this book speaks of the commandments it does not point to anything outside, like the words of your litany. It speaks of what is inside like the wish to do right always. It is that wish ruling the heart which lets a man stand before God without fear. Just listen." The Mirza turned to the Beatitudes and read, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," etc. When he came to the words, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," Selim started as though he had received an electric shock. Something like a veil over his mind had been rent. He reached out both hands and cried, "Give me that book."

He seized the Bible with the grip of a brigand and read over the words with thirsty soul. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." The truth was as clear as

though it had always been a part of his belief. Of course a clean heart is inseparable from piety! But the common experience of his life had been to approach God with the mouth and honour Him with the lips while the heart was far from Him. This was the first hint he had ever received that approach to God depends on harmony of the heart with Him. Through an unsuspected rift in the clouds which covered his horizon the sun had suddenly blazed forth, and the great fact was that he could see! Evil tolerated in the heart shuts out God! He was like a man walking on the banks of a well-known river who finds a nugget of gold in the sand. In that glad moment nothing suggested to him that self-will had vested interests in his life which would make travel in his new way to God different from a pleasure promenade. We rarely notice the great turning points in life or their significance.

Greatly amused was the philosophic Fire-worshipper at the spectacle of this ardent Mohammedan spending hours every day seeking in the Bible knowledge of God and of the means of purifying the heart from things that God hates. The Mirza watched with curiosity the effect upon Selim of the glowing eloquence of the Psalter; in the first

Psalm arousing wonder at those moral qualities which express dependence on God; in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm compelling a novel feeling of solemn joy in living under an all-seeing eye; in the twenty-third Psalm giving assurance of divine guidance and protection in a form that appealed to the sheep-master, who straightway named that Psalm the Shepherd's Wallet of Comfort; in the fifty-first Psalm becoming a torrent of unheard-of expressions of contrition for trespass and of passion for reform. There the young Kurd had to pause. He read over and over again the words that gave utterance to his longings hitherto inarticulate. "Who wrote this book," he cried, "which knows me? Why must a Mussulman learn how to express these plain truths that everybody knows from those whom we rate as infidels and blasphemers?"

Selim saw only Mohammedan truths concerning God in these Psalms, but elaborated and vivified. A man whose enjoyment of music has been fed by a village band of six brass instruments is struck dumb when he hears for the first time the orchestra in a great opera house. The Koran has a splendid rhetoric, beauty in some of its devotional passages, and the rhythm of its sonorous

diction is a standing challenge to imitators. But the words of the Bible are alive, and Selim felt that their yearning sympathy for erring and needy men the Koran meant to express but did not.

He had a right to add to his knowledge of God from any source, and it did not occur to him that his own people would call him a traitor to Islam for reading the Bible. So when he was about to go back to his family he asked Mirza Rustem to sell him the Bible to take with him. For he had found wisdom there.

"Oh, no," said Rustem. "I cannot give you this book. I do not yet know it. Although I have never seen a man who knows more about it than I do, they say there are people who live by it, and some day I may meet one of those people who can teach me more."

The Fire-worshipper, like Selim, was a groping seeker. As one traveller offers to another road-wisdom, Rustem said to Selim, "We have spent our time together in reading truths about God which we find in the Psalms and the Prophets. You had best read the New Testament also, to find the noblest ideas about manliness which have ever been written."

"But to what profit? They do not suit this world. Jesus Christ failed in His mission."

"The question with me," replied the Mirza, "is about Jesus Christ Himself. Did He fail? Both Muslims and Christians believe that He ascended to heaven whence He is to return. That is to say He lives. When He was on earth He could heal the sick and even raised the dead. I have a hope that He has power also to heal the soul which is growing worse and worse. Perhaps He can purify the heart. The foreigners at Urumia live, they say, according to His words; they might explain many things. I cannot go there, but if you will go to Urumia and find the foreigners who wear black hats and live white lives, I think, from what I hear, that they will help you understand, besides giving you a Bible to take with you."

Selim went nearly a hundred miles out of his homeward way to reach Urumia. But he thought it not far to go for the sake of getting that wonderful book, and instruction how to cleanse the heart. His future would rest on this journey.

In Urumia he asked where he could find the foreigners who wear black hats and teach religion. The Persian Mohammedan whom

he questioned told him the place with surprise. "These men preach," he added, "but no matter how large the congregation the preacher can tell only what he knows. These men know nothing at all about the Koran; what can they tell a Muslim? As for me, I say let the snake that doesn't bite me live a thousand years, but I will live somewhere else. You can do as you choose. Or perhaps," he added, "they owe you money?"

Selim thanked the Persian for his information, but did not enlighten him about his financial interests. His reticence on this point the Persian ascribed to Selim's sectarian snobbishness, and moved away with a fresh grievance against Turkish Muslims who do not accept the preëminence of the Caliph Ali.

In the morning, exulting in his easy success, Selim went to the house which had been pointed out to him, behind the public bath. Two or three men in the blue dress of Nestorian peasants were in the little court. They looked at him apprehensively. A man in his shirt sleeves (which were surprisingly white) did not look up from his work. He was fitting a cover to a box, measuring and sawing and finally nailing the boards in place so quickly and accurately that Selim, seeing that

he was a carpenter, turned away to seek some one else of whom he might inquire for the master of the house. In Persia religious teachers do not saw boards and nail box-covers. As he drove home the last nail the workman noticed Selim and straightening himself, hammer in hand, bade him welcome in rather rough Turkish.

It was like picking out a tangle of yarn for Selim to grasp the fact that the man with sweaty face and soiled hands was the great teacher of religion whom he had expected to find enthroned like Sheikh Abdullah in the midst of devoted followers who would think it shamefully wrong to let their teacher lift his hand to work. But Mr. Barlow, for that was the missionary's name, smiled so pleasantly, and invited him into the house so cordially, and led the way so persuasively, that Selim found himself, before he knew it, in a bright, cheerful room seated in the place of honour in the corner of the divan.

Mr. Barlow could understand neither Persian nor Arabic, and knew very little Turkish. He had come to Persia to teach the Nestorians and had put all his strength into the task of mastering the Syriac language. In a foreign Babel a missionary can only keep his head above water by concentrating upon one

of the many tongues. So poor Selim quickly saw that he could get no instruction from this new friend whose Turkish limped, and whose Syriac fluency was meaningless to a Kurd. When Mr. Barlow finally learned that Selim wanted a Bible he regretfully replied that he had only Syriac Bibles. There were missionaries at Mosul who spoke Arabic and they had Arabic Bibles. He was quite sure that Selim would find both Bible and interpreter if he would go to Mosul. Now Mosul is one hundred and fifty miles from Urumia!

Selim was bitterly disappointed. But Mrs. Barlow just here remembered an old Bible that no one seemed to understand or want. Perhaps that was Arabic. It was a large, dusty volume which she brought out from the depths of a closet. Selim at once said, "No, that is not the book. The one I want is a smaller book. I want a Bible."

"There is but one Bible," said Mr. Barlow. "The bigness of the book has nothing to do with its teachings. See, this is a Bible too," and he took from the table a well-worn pocket Bible in English. "If you can read that one you can read just what I read in this."

Selim opened the great and heavy book. "Why, this is Arabic," he said. "Yes, I can

read this. But does this book say, 'Blessed are the pure in heart'?"

Mr. Barlow did not know the Arabic letters nor even the numerals now used. He turned to the beginning of the New Testament and counted the chapters. At the fifth chapter he pointed with his finger to the short verses of the Beatitudes.

Selim looked eagerly at the place and read the Arabic words aloud. "Yes," he said, "that is the Book. Will you sell it to me?"

Mr. Barlow immediately gave it to him.

When Selim said in acknowledgment much more than Mr. Barlow could understand, he took the heavy book in his hands. Perplexity appeared in every line of his face. He suddenly realized that he could not carry such a weight, for he became foot-weary carrying merely his little bag of clothes and the cloak that served as his bed at night.

"I travel on foot," he said. "I cannot carry the book; it is too big. But will you be angry if I cut it?"

Mr. Barlow looked inquiringly into the frank face of the young man. He controlled his mouth which twitched at the thought of dividing a Bible with a cleaver, like a piece of meat which is larger than the traveller

cares to burden himself with. "Why, yes," he said, "cut it up if you wish."

"You won't be angry? You know I mean no disrespect to the book?"

"I would be glad if you could read it all," said Mr. Barlow; "but I have no objection to your cutting out what you can carry."

Selim drew his dirk from his girdle, cut out the book of Psalms because of its prayers, cut out the book of Daniel because its writer was wise in magic and lived in the land of his own ancestors, and cut out the three leaves of the New Testament containing the Sermon on the Mount. "I want to be pure in heart; I want to see God," he said to Mr. Barlow.

"By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ you shall see Him," said Mr. Barlow in a husky voice.

With this benediction Selim began a new chapter of experience. The next morning he started for Mosul to find a Bible that he could carry, and the men with the black hats who could help him understand its lessons. Although as firm a Muslim as ever, he felt that without the Book he could not live.

IX

THE TOY OF FATE

ALONG a rough narrow road with a huge rocky cliff on the left, and on the right the Zab River grumbling and roaring and tearing at its rocky bed, a battalion of Turkish soldiers was marching from Rowanduz towards Mosul. The road was rocky with big stones for stumblers, little stones set in holes to catch the feet, round stones polished to slipperiness, and pointed stones that seemed to wrench all the muscles at once. It was no more fit for a military march than the bed of a torrent. Built by skilled engineers for strategic uses, it had been left to its fate. The marching troops blamed fate for their discomfort; they should have blamed the fat man riding near the head of the column, or his superiors.

The soldiers were otherwise afflicted by the slackness of their chiefs. The day was three years past when new uniforms had been due. Their dark blue coats were white on the seams and ragged in the skirts.

Strips of red braid fluttered where once had been smart pipings. The red fez caps of the men were bleached and rent and bound to their heads by painted handkerchiefs faded to a neutral tint. Cotton rags were wrapped about their legs and feet; for shoes they wore the coarse rawhide sandals of the peasantry. In place of knapsacks they carried shapeless cotton bags stuffed with meagre belongings, residues of a useful equipment. The only tokens that might suggest the connection of these tatterdemalions with an organized army were their guns and the bayonets that rattled and jingled against the tinware of their cooking outfits. In the grumbling discussions of the march they laid the blame of their rags to fate. But these rags like the road were merely exhibits of the fact that forethought and initiative are not, while sloth and slackness are elements of the Oriental character.

The column came out from the shadow of the great cliff and entered a grassy meadow by the side of the noisy river. At the call of a bugle the troops halted, threw themselves with their guns upon the grass, and hastened to eat a very frugal lunch.

By a rock on the river bank, stretched upon the grass, lay a man upon whom even the

ragged soldiers could look as a pitiable caricature of humanity. A soiled white cotton shirt and drawers covered his body. His feet were bare. On his head was a pointed cap that had once been white. His face was gaunt and haggard. Mountains are not kind to men who journey among them shoeless and without tents.

One of the soldiers noticing this miserable figure shouted: "Why, there's our Selim! How are you, Selim? Haven't you found your shoes yet?"

"Never mind," cried another; "Selim is going to Mosul. At Mosul shoes grow on bushes. All you have to do is to reach them down."

At this the soldiers laughed. Even poor Selim tried to smile, though his forces were too much spent for successful effort of this kind.

A round-faced soldier with high cheek bones, and eyes aslant like a Tatar, was eating a watermelon which he shared with two or three of his chums. He held out a generous portion impaled on the point of his knife, saying, "Here, Selim, do you like melon?"

Selim was nearly starved. He tottered feebly like an old man towards the soldier.

He had stretched out his hand to take the rosy morsel of sweetness and his eyes glittered in anticipation when suddenly the soldier drew back his hand and thrust the piece of melon into his own mouth, his fat face expanding with the grin of a devil who has trapped a saint. The soldiers roared. Selim, angrily snapping out, "God grant that it may choke you!" went back to his rock and lay down with his back to his tormentors. Another soldier flung a piece of bread at the Kurd, knocking off his felt cap. Selim sprang up as if to charge the whole battalion. Then seeing the bread, he clutched it and ate like a tramp's dog. It was his first food in twenty-four hours.

After lunch the bugle called the soldiers to prayers. They were lined up to their devotions by command, as if it were a part of their drill. Selim, drawn to worship by habit and for fellowship, stood up with the soldiers. When the four "rounds" of the litany were done, the bugle sounded, the slovenly soldiers pulled themselves together, and took up their march with the dragging shuffle peculiar to farm hands who have never been taught to keep step. The disreputable column, with its pack train of half-starved mules and donkeys, disappeared in the winding valley

of the rushing river. Selim remained alone, by his rock.

Selim's experiences since setting out for Mosul had been of the class which we ascribe to fate, because it is not pleasant to admit blind thoughtlessness. He had started on his journey with no more precise goal than a foreigner at Mosul wearing a black hat. He had chosen a short cut through the mountains in order quickly to reach his destination ; but he had left out of his plan the people who live in those savage mountains. They are mostly Nestorians, ignorant and rough as the Kurds whom they fear and cordially hate. He had not thought! On that road there were no Mohammedan towns where he could linger, as was his wont, to earn money for his journey by writing mottoes. The universal hospitality to travellers among the mountain Nestorians excludes Kurds. Selim had to plead and beg before he got even a swallow of milk given with the suspicion that holds the Nestorian's hand to his yataghan when he meets a Kurd. Selim had not remembered this. What little money he had was quickly used up in buying shelter for the night in cow stables.

At Rowanduz Selim fared better. There he earned a little money by his skill in writ-

ing and by casting horoscopes. His skill brought him the acquaintance of Colonel Ali Bey, commanding a battalion under orders to march to Mosul. With him Selim had discussed Persian poetry and Arabian theology, and so had been invited to travel with the troops. Food, protection and shelter at night were thus provided ; but Selim had not foreseen that his treasured pages of the Bible might attract attention. Here again his own recklessness became his fate.

On the second day out from Rowanduz, during the noon rest, Selim wandered off to bathe in the river. Having sufficiently refreshed himself he went up the bank to put on his clothes ; but meanwhile some one had carried off his cloak, his bag of clothing with the precious pages cut from the Bible, his trousers, his turban, his girdle, his finely etched dirk, his shoes—all his possessions except his conical felt cap and his shirt. These had been left as worthless or from sheer mercy which should be noted to the credit of the thief. Happily he had worn his white cotton drawers into the water. The lowest of tramps in that land might dress as he was dressed after this dreadful blow of fortune!

When the unlucky traveller reached the camp that evening he was jeered by the

soldiers: "Did you forget to dress this morning?" "Have you stripped for a fight? Come on!" "He knows that we have to ford the river day after to-morrow and thought it best to get ready at once."

Selim went straight to the tent of the Colonel, where several officers were lounging by the camp-fire. He saluted as usual, forgetting, like most sons of misfortune, the point of view of others. The Colonel scowled at him and shouted, "What do you mean by coming here like that? Clear out!"

"Pardon me, sir, I am the scribe Selim to whom you were so kind in Rowanduz. They have stolen my clothes and I just wanted to ask if you would kindly let me have a cloak or a horse blanket to sleep on until we reach Mosul."

"This is not a Jew clothesman's shop. Get out of here! Mustapha! Ahmed! where are you?"

Selim did not wait for strong-arm men to throw him out. That night, hungry, hopeless and shivering, he lay on the ground with a low clump of juniper as a wind-break to lessen his sleepless misery. His very breath seemed a calamity! Selim felt that he had not deserved this. He had imagined the Book to be the end of difficulty in his quest;

but cold and hunger outweighed the Book. "It is enough, let me die, O Lord," was his prayer. Even the leaves of the Bible, for which he had walked in weariness day after day, had been taken from him! Sooner or later he must give up his notion of learning and growing. He might as well be content with the rules of the tribe: Go the way of all flesh and be at ease; get what you can; keep what you get; and pray that your death may be on a Friday.

Then a thought came to the poor fellow: Perhaps Colonel Ali Bey was a bigot and had caused him to be robbed for the sake of getting the Bible leaves away from him. The robber must have been a soldier, since neither tent nor hut was on that useless road. This thought turned the current of his repinings into fury against the Colonel, with vain plotting of revenge for his cruel treatment. The only retaliation that he could take would be to hold to his purpose of seeking the Bible teachers. This would deprive the Colonel of glory in his success in wresting the Book from the hands of the Free-thinker. With such weak, foolish thoughts Selim wrestled as he lay shivering by the juniper bush until dawn.

The next day he followed the soldiers at a

distance. He carefully searched their deserted camp and found a few bits of bread that had been thrown away. At one place he saw some black ants marching like energetic and smart troopers, each carrying aloft a broken kernel of wheat, with others returning empty along their narrow trail for another load. Then following a sudden thought he trailed the returning ants to their plunder and found as much as two handfuls of cracked wheat spilt from some soldier's provision bag. He carefully gathered every particle, leaving the ants in active perplexity about the mysteriously vanished provender. He writhed under this last thrust of misfortune which made him envious of ants; but he did not see that his own carelessness was the cause of his troubles.

Now, lying by the rock where the soldiers had left him, Selim found the lure of home gradually controlling his impulses. Like the young scapegrace in the parable of the prodigal, he kept returning to the thought, "How many hired servants in my father's house have bread and to spare, while I perish with hunger!" One day's tramp through the mountains to the southeast ought to take him to Khoi Sanjak where he would find plenty among the Kurds of his own tribe.

They would supply him every comfort for travelling to the Kurd's Bed, where by this time Hassan Bey must have established his camp for the summer. What are kith and kin for but to rally to the side of him who is in joy or grief? On the other hand, two days' journey, or at the most three, to the westward, would take him to Mosul. Whom was he to seek in that great city? Why go there at all? How could he venture unclothed as he was into a city?

All his life this young fellow had been accustomed to reach out and clutch whatever his heart desired. Now the old blind love of easy ways strove like a demon to turn him back to his mother. His thoughts fluttered like summer birds, now to the right, now to the left, now high overhead. He wished that he might read with his own eyes that Psalm of the Shepherd; that he might restore his soul by other tonic passages of the Bible. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Is hunger and nakedness so trivial as to be winked at in the promise of this Psalm? What if that longing search for the knowledge of God, those fervent prayers for guidance, were mere dreams that pass in the night? Was he not after all a mere toy of fate? One thing was certain: in

three days he might, if he chose, have all his wants supplied by a loving mother's hand. Yet he still despised that life of expedients and hollow formulas. After tasting freedom could he endure the tyranny of his Muslim censors? At this point he began to perceive that his own carelessness was an element in his misfortunes. If he had only planned a little!

This destitute young man was to fix the direction of his whole life as he lay half-naked and hungry in the gorge of the Zab. Decision came to him when there drifted into his mind some curious words which Mirza Rustem had read to him from the Bible as illustrating the effect upon men of old of true faith in God. "They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Those men and women endured because they believed Him whom they trusted. He surely could endure for the sake of learning about God. Selim stiffly arose to his feet. "I will go," he said, "to Mosul to see those teachers from the foreign land. Then I shall know what to do. If then I still wish to go back, I can do so."

The Zab and the Valley of Decision for Selim

Standing by the river with its hoarse monotonous voice roaring in his ears, Selim washed his face, his hands, and his feet. Then with the grass for a prayer rug, he recited the regular litany of Mohammedan worship, bowing, kneeling humbly, bringing his forehead to the ground in guileless adoration. An aching heart throbbed in every word of the prayer that he loved, "Guide me in the straight way, the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious." To him that worship was a vow to trust, and to press his seeking for vision of the Living God. Having made the vow he went his way.

X

THE FOREIGNER WITH A BLACK HAT

SELIM'S really noble decision in the gorge of the Zab was taken in a heroic spirit, yet he did not foresee that it committed him to at least one tremendous battle. All that he realized was that because of his hearty wish to do right in the sight of God he might not look back to the leeks and onions of the life in which he was born. His decision, which rested on the Bible principle of the necessity of doing right, was in conflict with a cardinal principle of Islam, which regards doing right as a mere matter of expediency or individual convenience. His decision committed him to a study of the Bible which sooner or later must reveal its conflict with the doctrines as well as the moral principles of his religion. An upheaval of the solid ground beneath his feet awaited him after he allowed the Mosul road to lead him over the Zab.

In a region of bunglers such as inhabit the Turkish province he now entered, the fellowship of failure binds the poor together.

Among people almost as destitute as himself Selim had bread and milk or even cheese for the asking. One village of mud huts gave him a pair of old sandals to ease his battered feet. At another village where he led the evening worship, and recited the first Psalm from memory, the simple people revered him as a saint for these good words, and the head man of the village gave him an old and rather ragged cloak to lie on at night, telling him to take it with him when he went away. At an encampment of four Kurdish tents, the people insisted on his accepting a pair of worn trousers and a jacket. Upon his hesitating to receive from people so poor, the shepherds quoted to him a proverb of the desert: "Man's flesh cannot be eaten, his hair cannot be woven into cloth, his skin cannot be tanned for leather; of what use is he unless he helps his fellows?"

By the time that Selim, near the broken mounds of Nineveh, came to the dusty dome known as the tomb of the prophet Jonah, whence he could see beyond the Tigris the city that was his goal, his courage was restored and he was elated, for in Mosul was the foreigner with a black hat who would give him a Bible and interpret it to him in terms of the daily life.

The flotsam and jetsam from the marauding forays of centuries still appear on the road to the Tigris Bridge at Mosul. The blood of many nations mingles in the veins of the well-to-do dwellers in that city. Perhaps some day science may identify, as it does bacilli, the ingredients of blood corpuscles—this corpuscle as showing traces of the Assyrians of Shalmaneser, that as from Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian finest, another as betraying descent from the Parthians of Darius, and yet others as related to the mysterious Hittites, to the romantic Greeks of Alexander's phalanxes, to lithe camp-followers from India, to the commercial Nabatheans, to the luxurious Persians of Chosroes, or to the heavy-handed Tatars of Jenghiz Khan. As might be expected from one gifted by heredity with a perplexing mixture of blood, the citizen of Mosul, as he saunters along in his red, blue, or buff robe, looks as if he were surfeited with life's experiences. But he is also liable on occasion to revert to any one of a score of ancestral types which bring dismay to the bystander.

While strolling along that road one day, Selim suddenly stopped, with the ejaculation, "Glory to God!" Coming towards him was a foreigner carrying a large umbrella and

wearing a broad-brimmed, low-crowned black hat. This was the man of whom he was in search! His kindly face made that certain. Mohammedans seldom trouble themselves with the difference between sects of Christians, and Selim had no doubts at this point. Through the narrow, dirty streets he followed the foreigner. He tried to invent excuses for speaking to him, and quickened his walk. He checked his pace, for he had nothing to say. The foreigner stopped at a large stone house in a narrow alley, and was about to enter the open door. Selim feared lest he lose him, and almost shouting, said, "Peace be to you, sir."

The foreigner returned the salutation in a pleasant voice, in very good Arabic, adding, "What is your pleasure, sir?"

"Are you the man who has come from abroad to teach your religion?"

"Why do you ask? Are you not a Mohammedan?"

"Yes, I am a Mohammedan and I am a seeker for the knowledge of God. Perhaps your excellency will help my search after wisdom."

The foreigner muttered, "Sanctissima Madonna"; for he suspected some trick or trap, since Mohammedans do not address Chris-

tians in that way. Nevertheless, with polite cordiality he invited Selim into the house and ushered him into a little reception-room by the door. On learning that the young man was a Kurd the missionary showed more interest; but when he found that this Kurd insisted on his wish to learn how to draw near to God, he excused himself a moment in order to consult his colleagues. Returning after a few moments he asked Selim whether he had permission to inquire into such matters. This surprised Selim, and the missionary explained that foreigners have to be rather careful not to give offense by what they do. "However," he added, "a service is about to begin in the church, and if you would like to witness it, we can talk more after it is over."

Calling an attendant the missionary told him to see that Selim had a good place in the church, and then he himself went into the sacristy. Going through a short passageway they came out into a large room with a high ceiling. It was rather dark and though many candles were burning it was not easy to see clearly. The window glass was of bright colours and the most of the candles were grouped at one end of the room on a raised platform. Selim was given a cushion on the floor on which to sit. He found him-

self surrounded by men and women whom their dress showed to be Christians. They seemed to shrink from the white turbaned Muslim.

Selim now discovered through the curious hesitations of the missionary a new aspect of his enterprise. He had learned to like the Bible opened to him with suggestions and comments by Mirza Rustem, who was a neutral bystander, so to speak, while the men to whom he must look in Mosul were aggressive champions of Christianity. They believed that their teachings would make him cast off his faith in Mohammed, a thing which had never entered his head. The thought made him shudder. His presence in that Christian church compromised him.

A beautiful chant now called for his attention, as a procession of acolytes and priests entered the church, a boy carrying a great gold cross in front, others swinging censers, while the sweet music of the chorale and the deep tones of the organ filled the Kurd with wonder and a strange delight. For an instant Selim thought that this delight was like that which had come to him in the Nakishbendi hall of worship in Kerkuk when he was in a trance through long repetition of the phrase of the unity of God.

Again his mind was captured; the priests took their places at the sides of the chancel and the litany was said in some unknown tongue. A feeling of disappointment came over the Mohammedan seeker, for nothing in the service carried meaning to his mind, and he had a vague notion that these priests in their splendid robes were not men for common mortals to reach with ignorant questions.

A man with a prayer-book sitting next to Selim held his book so that the stranger could look over it. One page was in some unknown tongue, but the opposite page was Arabic. The man turned over some pages as a single voice began to read from a huge volume. As Selim looked at the book again he was thrilled to see there in Arabic his Shepherd's Wallet of Comfort—the twenty-third Psalm. Many weeks had passed since he had lost his precious leaves of the Psalms. So much the more glad was he to see that Psalm in this book. His position cleared itself. Where that book was read must be the place which he had suffered much to find. He was content.

As the service went on the officiating priest with bowed head was kneeling in prayer before the altar. All the kneeling congregation were responding, "Amen." Selim also knelt,

his eyes occupied with the splendour and glitter of colour. He could see the details of the altar as he could not at first; he wondered at the vases of artificial flowers; at the golden vessels shining upon the altar, at the lace and embroidery of the altar cloth; he lifted his eyes to other decorations above. There for the first time he noted the statue of a woman with a crown of gold on her head, a veil flowing over her shoulders and a huge cross filling the space behind her. His Mohammedan hatred for images rose instantly in revolt. He caught the arm of the man at his side, saying, "What is that thing up there?"

The worshipper, rudely disturbed in his devotions, but knowing Mohammedans too well to miss the feeling behind the question, replied, "Oh, that is nothing! Keep quiet! It is the picture of the mother of God."

"God forbid! God forbid!" said Selim over and over to himself, as gathering up his shoes and turning his back on the mysteries of the altar, he picked his way out of the church among the kneeling worshippers.

At the door a sacristan said to him, "The service is not half over. Will you not see the rest of it?"

"No, it is enough," said Selim as he almost ran from the church.

While he rapidly walked down the street, he was still muttering to himself, "God forbid! God forbid that I should worship idols! There is no god but God and Mohammed is the prophet of God. Christians are idolaters. It is not for me to lose my faith by studying their Bible in hopes of learning how to draw near to God."

A furious anger filled the man's soul. He had been deceived into thinking he had found the true interpreters of the truth, and that image had brought sudden disillusionment to his mind. He longed to be revenged on Mirza Rustem who had drawn him into the study of the Bible and on Mr. Barlow who had induced him to undertake the long, dreadful journey to Mosul to secure the Book in which he would find God. His dream was dreamed; he was himself again. From this on he would follow the path which was his destiny and permit no wild notions to make him seek a better; now he need no more be a toy of fate. He had lost time and had suffered needlessly, but he was exactly where he was before beginning his quest. There was a topographical difference but he could quickly go home to the plateau and forget that he had been away!

It was nearly sunset, when shortly after

this soul-disturbing adventure, Selim, strolling towards the Tigris Bridge in the usual medley of people, heard the curious snoring snort with which the Soudanese express disapproval. He turned and found himself face to face with Suleiman, the servant of Hassan Bey! It was a joyful meeting, for Selim had not heard directly from home during the two years of his exile. A volley of questions almost breathlessly given brought out the fact that Suleiman had come to Mosul to sell a quantity of the produce of the flock and to buy gaily coloured turban cloth for the men and white muslin to be painted or embroidered by the women. The old henchman of Hassan Bey then told with great detail the small gossip of the camp, which centred entirely about the welfare of the great flocks; how the spotted ram broke off his horn in the forest, how the ewes brought from Persia had thriven and increased, how Yahya, the head-shepherd, with a stick in his bare hands had captured a wolf, and so on. The crafty Oriental left the greater news to be hinted at and finally suggested rather than told at the end. Hassan Bey, the chief, was so infuriated by the story which Sheikh Abdullah told of Selim's misconduct and flight into Persia, that he could with difficulty be

restrained from sallying forth at once to find and kill his son. He finally contented himself, however, with a blood-curdling oath that he never again would receive him as his son. Then by further diplomatic progress, by hints and remarks upon the strangeness of God's dealings with His servants, the old Kurd brought the long story to a terrible climax—Fatima, Selim's mother, was dead!

Notwithstanding the sorrow that almost paralyzed his mind, when Suleiman made him understand that his dear mother had gone from this world, the bereavement made a man of Selim. During all those early days in Mosul, the young Kurd was more and more inclined to decide that it was well to give up his aspirations, and accept the fact that a Mohammedan like a Chinaman may neither have ideals nor grow. Nothing seemed to hinder his going back to the mountain plateau to take up the ordinary routine of his life as a Kurdish sheep-master. Now, however, that was impossible. His mother was gone, his father was alienated; but he would bear himself sturdily under the weight of these bitter sorrows.

It was not long before Selim secured an appointment under the government as teacher in one of the public schools in the city. He

was expected to see that small children learned properly to intone the Koran, to recite the litany, and to wonder at the traditional life of Mohammed as it was read or as they tried to commit it to memory.

A month after Selim had taken charge of the school, the Inspector of public instruction, from whom he had obtained the appointment, called at his rooms. After a little preliminary bandying of oily compliments the Inspector let it be understood that Selim had to pay him every month ten per cent. of his salary in consideration of services rendered in securing him the appointment. The Inspector, who was also a regular preacher at one of the great mosques, seeing some hesitation on the part of Selim, said to him, "There are plenty of men who would be glad to pay even more than ten per cent. for getting your place. Of course I would not think of such men when we can have such abilities as yours. But you must not suppose," he continued, "that I got my office for nothing. We can none of us live unless we help one another."

The argument was as convincing as a highwayman's pistol, and Selim handed over the money. The Inspector, however, was not pleased with his hesitation, slight though it

was, and remarked drily, "Some of our people think that you ought to be dismissed in any case. They say you have been in the Roman Catholic church." With that he took his departure.

Selim felt personally humiliated because a pious preacher in the Mohammedan community was not ashamed to be a simple grafter, using his white turban to swell his hoard of money. It had been like a sentence to prison to be forced to cease investigating the Bible and its teachings; but, just as he was ready to drop back into the rut that had cramped him from childhood, to have the personal corruption of Muslims flung in his face angered him. It was as if some voice had told him he was a fool. And for a time he was ready to say with the fool, "There is no God."

As to the hint that somebody kept his doings in view, even his visit to the Roman Catholic church being known to the police, Selim did not reflect upon it until some weeks later. His cheek did not pale on thinking of this surveillance nor did he lose sleep worrying over it. It was an element of Islam. The injustice of the Inspector's insinuation filled his mind. "What is the Christian church to me?" he demanded of

himself. "The instant I saw the image of the woman I ran, horrified, confessing sin, crying to God, the refuge of sinner and saint. Yet this Inspector suspects that my thought was evil. Such a man is to be shunned; I would fear him even in eternity."

A like suspicion had always pursued Selim. It had made his father execrate and disown him; it caused the murder of Salih at Kerkuk; it led Colonel Ali Bey to leave him stripped on that dreadful mountain road. All Islam seemed to have combined against his habit of thinking for himself. But the young man's teeth now clenched in determination that although he was a Muslim none should rob him of the right to think without which men become beasts. Here he could join issue with all the bigots in Turkey!

XI

A MAN OF UNCLASSIFIED SPECIES

THE same afternoon Selim saw a very curious spectacle in the cotton goods bazaar. The most of the shopkeepers there were Chaldean, Greek, or Armenian Christians. Selim's attention was caught by a quick motion of one of these shopkeepers who was eating his lunch of bread and onions with quiet enjoyment. The man threw the green onion tops across the narrow street into the stall of a tall, benevolent-looking old man, as if into a garbage pail. Almost at the same moment another shopkeeper, calling out, "Here, puppy! Here, puppy!" threw a bone into the same stall. Selim was disgusted not only with those who were annoying the quiet old shopkeeper but at the latter also who, instead of swearing and rushing with furious gestures upon those who maltreated him, paid no attention to them whatever. He merely removed the refuse from his stall and sat down again. It was the most extraordinary thing he had ever seen in relations between men. Among the

Kurds the very women would hoot at a man who would submit to injury so tamely. Selim could not think that the old man was a coward, for his eye had flashed and his hands had clenched when for a moment it seemed that he would punish the indignity. Some strong influence had held his anger under control. The case was an unclassified curiosity!

The cotton goods bazaar was a little out of Selim's regular course to his school, but to see the old man who was endowed with power to get angry, but did not, he several times went through the bazaar, as one might go through the Zoo to take another look at the hippopotamus. Selim thus chanced upon another very curious incident. One of the shopkeepers, whom he recognized as the sneering cynic who threw the bone into the old man's stall, slipped on a melon rind and fell heavily to the pavement. The other tradesmen laughed and jeered, but the kindly old man who had borne his abuse a day or two before sprang from his stall, raised the fallen man, asked if he was hurt, brushed the dust from his clothes, and brought water to clean his hands. If his enemy had been a loved brother he could not have done more. He even wished the man Godspeed with embar-

rassing cheerfulness in answer to a muttered word of thanks.

Selim stood open mouthed. The preciousness of revenge, to the very last pound of flesh, was one of the foundation principles of his education. Why did this man forego that priceless privilege of manhood when his tormentor lay sprawling at his feet? What sort of an equipment had such a man for breasting the storms of every-day life?

The next day Selim yielded to an impulse to speak to the old shopkeeper whose name, he had learned, was Shemmas (Deacon) Suleiba. He found the man seated among his piles of goods, after the manner of Oriental merchants when not waiting on customers, upon a rug on the floor of his stall. His pastime seemed to be a book. One thing was inexplicable. While the faces of the other shopkeepers were sour and repellent this man's countenance radiated kindness and content. Selim gave Suleiba the customary salutation, "Peace be to you."

"On you be peace!" replied Suleiba. "Come in."

Selim left his shoes on the pavement and seated himself cross-legged on the rug.

"Do they plague you still?" he asked.

"Who plague me?"

"Why, those ruffians who threw things at you and called you a Framason (Freemason) and a puppy."

"They do not know what they are doing. Some day they will know. I can wait."

"I do not understand why you wait. You are a man; why not give as good as you get? At least curse them in a manly way. Even a dog would snarl in such a case!"

"This book has taught me," said Suleiba, "to give blessing for cursing. A fruit of following that rule is peace and quietness and assurance forever."

"What sort of a religion is yours? I never heard of such a religion!"

"It is the religion taught by Jesus Christ. Years ago some men exiled themselves here from America that they might teach us how to draw near to God. They brought us this Bible. Ever since it has been a light to my path."

"Have you a Bible? Let me see it," said Selim huskily and trembling with excitement. He took the book, turned the leaves and his face shone as he read, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,"—the words which again warmed his heart as they did when he first read them in Persian in Mirza Rustem's library!

During all these months Selim had let the gusts of bigotry drive him from his bearings. Now as he turned quickly from one familiar passage of the Bible to another he forgot his despair and his doubts. He was once more the eager, hopeful seeker. The clear axiomatic sentences of the Bible have power to grip the mind of him who reads it, so that he is never just the same as he was before, even though he rejects the book as a whole.

Shemmas Suleiba eyed the young man with curiosity. "You have seen the Bible before, have you not?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Selim. "Where can I get one? Did you get it from the foreigners at the church in the alley?"

"Not from them! They do not give Bibles there! I have some here if you want one."

"Then those foreigners who kneel to pictures are not the Americans you speak of?"

"God forbid! American missionaries used to live here and brought us the Bible. Three of them are buried in our cemetery. They could not endure this climate. One of the missionaries now visits us at least once every year, but we are orphans between the visits."

Selim now understood that because of his ignorance and the black hats worn by the Roman Catholic priests he had made the

mistake of thinking them to be the teachers whom Mirza Rustem and Mr. Barlow had told him to find. A load was lifted from his heart. Forgetting that Mohammedans are never forgiven such inquiries, he almost shouted, "Then I can get a Bible from you, and ask you to help me understand it."

"Here is a small Bible," said Suleiba, "which will not attract attention. But let me say one word about reading it. The truth which you find there is not to be admired as a good notion because you see it is true. It is to be planted in the heart as a seed from which conduct and character grow."

"I believe you," said Selim. "All my life has been filled with discontent because I knew that I needed to grow better but could not. Everybody has frowned upon me as a 'free-thinker.' You will let me come to you, will you not, once in a while to ask questions? For questions rise from the reading of this book."

This was the beginning of a warm, cordial friendship. Shemmas Suleiba was drawn to the young Kurd whom a voice within had persistently stirred to dissatisfaction with the smug, religious self-complacency of his own people. The Muslim, on the other hand,

watched this man to discover the pet vice that like other men he must secretly cherish. But he was amazed at the pure, artless, strong manhood which placed Suleiba head and shoulders above all men whom he had known.

Selim was not destined long to enjoy the pleasure which springs from obstacles overthrown. Every Mohammedan finds pleasure in serving the cause of religion by watching against laxity in other Mohammedans. One of his scholars met him as he arrived at his school one morning with a crumpled and rather dirty letter. He said that a stranger had left it "for the teacher."

To set his pupils at their lessons was like pressing the button of an electric circuit; at one word from the teacher, the whole room burst forth into a singsong chorus "a-b, ab, b-a, ba," etc. When the children were in full cry, Selim read his letter. This was what he read:

"Selim, you have travelled to Mosul with Colonel Ali Bey who discovered that you carry with you leaves from the spurious Gospel of Jesus, on whom be peace. At Mosul you have attended the Christian church in spite of its idols and false worship. For thus disgracing the pure clan of your fathers you have me to deal with. I have sharpened my

yataghan, and by the great God in a short time I will cut your heart out of your miserable carcass.—Osman, son of Kemal."

Selim folded the letter, put it in his pocket, and proceeded with the duties of the hour, as if the paper had not seemed to bring Osman Aga's very voice to his ears. Perhaps his contempt for Osman was a factor in the calmness with which he received the threat. What gave him more concern was the revelation made by the letter that his actions were watched and discussed. He had not for a single moment swerved from his loyalty to his religion. He attended the services in the mosque; he faithfully performed all the required religious duties. He knew that the men about him were not godly men, but he himself had tried to live uprightly. He had found new views of God and of the service of God in the Bible and he had lately rejoiced in going over again their simple, self-evident truths. These truths related to God—the God of Mohammed—the only God. They did not undermine any article of his faith but confirmed and illuminated the grounds of his belief.

Yet somebody or some people, filled with Mohammedan intolerance of free thought, were following his every movement with the

intention of chaining him up. This close and hostile watch upon his freedom was of one piece with that which the Inspector of Schools had suggested to his mind in his reference to Selim's visit to the Catholic church. Eyes were fixed upon him. Nothing could escape their inquisitive glare. Some monster, unseen but masterful, might try at any moment to force him back into the iron mold which deforms Mohammedan manhood as foot-binding in China deforms growing girlhood. This secret surveillance is a terror to thousands of educated Muslims. The vague anxiety had scarcely been aroused in Selim when the monster struck his blow.

The primary school which Selim taught was housed in a vaulted stone building in the courtyard of one of the largest mosques of the city. From the court a short flight of stone steps, worn by a hundred and fifty years of use, leads up to a paved porch under a small dome supported by four slender columns. Here the children leave their shoes before stepping upon the polished marble threshold of the schoolroom. The schoolroom itself was high and airy under its great vaulted roof. The whole surface of the vault as well as the walls were whitewashed. The only decorations were four or five ornamental

tablets bearing verses from the Koran; one of the most graceful of these inscriptions, having been drawn by Selim himself, contained the one sentence, "God is beautiful; He loves beauty."

The floor of the schoolroom was covered with a coarse but clean matting upon which the scholars sit while busy with their lessons. Opposite the great door and near one of the deep embrasured windows was a platform raised about six inches above the floor of the room. Here the teacher sits, cross-legged, on a red and white striped cushion. A low stand at his right hand held his inkstand, his reed pens, his penknife, his paper and two or three books. This primitive outfit is the only approximation to a desk in such a school.

When Selim sauntered through the courtyard one morning there were no scholars awaiting him at the door. He was startled to hear the children's voices shouting their spelling lesson as if school had already opened. On approaching the door he was astonished to see an old man, a stranger, sitting on his cushion and, quite at his ease, sharpening reed pens. Selim was searching for words sufficiently keen to score the impudence of the intruder when the old man said in a patronizing tone:

"Good luck to you, sir; what did you wish?"

"What do I wish?" said Selim rather loudly. "I am the teacher of this school and I do not require your assistance."

The smaller scholars stilled their singsong shouting, but the older ones with fine diplomatic sense kept up their chorus unbroken. The old man without moving from his vantage ground replied in the even tone of one who is sure of his rights.

"Excuse me, sir, I am the teacher of this school, and I must beg that you will not interrupt the lessons."

"What do you mean by thrusting yourself into this place?" cried Selim hotly. "The Department of Public Instruction appointed me the teacher of this school. Please do not longer disturb my pupils."

"I have an appointment of more recent date," replied the interloper; "if you wish you may read it," and without rising he held out a large sheet of official paper.

Selim stepped forward, deftly avoiding collision with the small students who very nearly fully covered the floor. The document was perfectly clear and regular. It was dated the previous day and appointed Fehmi Effendi to be teacher of the Abbas mosque

primary school, "in the place of Selim Effendi removed." It stated a fact that the writer was glad to hide from the outgoing teacher. Selim handed the document back to his successor, preserving outward calm while suffering the inward pangs of humiliation so skillfully devised for him. Saying, "May it be sweet to you," he turned away and left the place, the new teacher adding one more wound to his pride by the malicious grin with which he said, "May God go with you!"

As Selim went out the stern voice of the new teacher ordered the children to go on with their lesson and the chorus of voices seemed a pean of triumph at the discomfiture of him who had carefully taught them during the months of his service.

The Inspector of Schools had no explanations to make about this summary dismissal. He was polite and even friendly in manner.

"They appointed Fehmi Effendi to take that school," the Inspector said, "and the instant he got the appointment he was off. He went so fast that a stone from a sling could not have caught up with him. There was no time to tell you. I am sorry; but you know I told you there are rumours that you are too friendly with the Christians.

Many kinds of people make up this world. Fat or lean, may God accept them all!"

Selim did not quite accept the Inspector's implied friendliness to himself. A Turkish official always has two sides and one must be sure that he has seen both before he may build on friendly words. When Selim applied to the city Treasury for three months' arrears of pay he was confirmed in his vague suspicion that his summary dismissal was a policy rather than an accident. He was asked to call the next week. At the end of the week he was put off another week. After a week he appeared at the Treasury once more, and the official said to him, "What is your hurry? You have waited these three weeks, you can surely wait a little longer." Clearly all the officials had a hidden reason for treating him in this manner. They feared his active mind. This made them all discriminate against him.

Meantime Selim established himself as a public scribe. He hired a little stall in the edge of the bazaars, and prepared petitions, legal documents, love-letters—anything that illiterate men of business need to have put on paper in clear and legible form. He was a real artist in Arabic and Persian caligraphy, such an artist as connoisseurs appreciate.

More than once he was paid as much as a dollar for writing the graceful curves of the single Arabic character which is used to represent the phrase "He who is," that is to say, God. The beautiful Arabic mottoes which he wrote were always in demand for wall decoration in that land where pictures are tabooed. So he made his living while waiting for money due from the school, which in actual fact he never received.

XII

IN DARKNESS A GREAT LIGHT

THE unseen forces in a Mohammedan country which set themselves as barriers in the way of him who thinks and questions do not necessarily proceed from official censors of men's thoughts. Lynch law is not an indigenous product of American social life but a reversion in America to customs as old as the time when there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes. Some passer-by saw Selim go with a priest into the Roman Catholic church and reported him to the authorities as an erring brother. Colonel Ali Bey discovered Selim's possession of the leaves of the Bible, caused them to be taken from him, and gave them to the authorities at Mosul as proof that this young man was a lax Mohammedan. Other ardent Mohammedans, dreading the effect of breaking over traditional limitations, reported to the authorities as a thing to be punished Selim's friendly relations with the Protestant deacon

Suleiba. Importance was given to this tale-bearing when each man called to ask the Governor what had been done about Selim.

So it came to pass that the Inspector of Schools, on his own motion and without orders, replaced Selim as teacher of the Abbas primary school and reported him to the Governor as dangerous. The Governor, the Cadi (judge), the Colonel, the Inspector of Schools, and other defenders of the faith, discussed Selim's evil curiosity about matters outside of the Mohammedan fold. The Cadi was more or less of a liberal himself and said that any need of action depended upon the question whether Selim neglected worship. All admitted that Selim was regularly at the mosque and performed all his religious duties. Then said the Cadi, "If this man performs his religious duties and goes to mosque, he is a Mohammedan in good standing. Anything else that he does is an affair between him and his God." This convinced the Governor that no action was called for; but he commended all who had taken an interest in the case and advised them to watch the young man for further symptoms of disorder. As understood by all present this meant that any good Muslim would unobtrusively see what he could of Selim's life, and clamour at

the gate of authority for his punishment whenever any new act seemed to threaten the domination of Islam.

Of this council and its solemn sanction of suspicion towards himself Selim knew nothing. A very small fire caused all that smoke at the government headquarters. Selim's Mussulman acquaintances had a greediness for flesh-pots which disgusted him; they continually made amazing mistakes of conscience. "What they take up breaks and what they throw away hits somebody," was his mental comment upon their freebooting excursions into the border lands of ethics. But he laid such mistakes to awkwardness and ignorance; his mind had not yet pictured a bastard religion. The Koran teaches the eternal truth that there is no god but God, and Selim believed its claim that this was the religion of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus—the only religion. Hence he worshipped in the house of God; that is to say in the mosque. In this way the simplicity and sincerity of Selim's religious instincts balked for the time the carping bigots.

But the Kurd was a man in other ways than in generosity towards his critics. His dismissal from the school at the Abbas mosque, and Osman Aga's absurd and blood-

thirsty letter with its revelation of the gossip, now flooding tent and hovel throughout the district, drove him to renewed study of his Bible. He went more frequently to the deacon's house because of that impertinent meddling with his freedom of thought. As a protection against the surveillance which he felt but could not quite discover, he commonly visited Shemmas Suleiba at night, soon after the last evening service at the mosque. The visits were always welcomed because Suleiba liked the straightforward young Muslim who seemed to him to be losing faith in Mohammed through his persistent Bible study. Suleiba did not know that Selim's desires were still limited to a few reforms in the morals of Islam.

After a while Selim noticed that the south end of the narrow garden of a house in the Mohammedan quarter lay against the side wall of Suleiba's garden in the outskirts of the city. In that house, the entrance to which was on a narrow lane called the Street of No Turning, Selim managed to hire a room to which he moved with all his belongings. His new landlord was a good old Mohammedan named Hamdi, who had the rare virtue of considering every man a saint who did not interfere with his business. Hamdi's busi-

ness was making splint baskets in a shop under his house. The old fellow observed that his new lodger on some evenings spent much time in the garden, but his simple soul was not curious as to what he did there. What Selim did in the garden was to hasten to its lower end and scramble over a mud wall and join Suleiba at the bench under his apricot trees by the river bank. This was an easy solution of a serious problem, for Selim, living in the Mohammedan quarter could now reach unobserved the house of Suleiba in the distant Christian quarter of the city.

The deacon was not only the cleanest, most truthful, and devout, and withal the strongest man he had ever met. He was also of the land; not a foreigner. He could reveal in his own experiences how the Bible worked upon an Oriental mind, and his views of the Book would be confidences from behind the scenes, as it were. However learned and pious a missionary from abroad with a black hat might be, Selim could not give to his words half the weight that belongs to the natural idioms of a child of the Turkish soil. So men inhabiting the gutter are more influenced by a slum-worker who himself was dug out of the gutter.

In dealing with Selim Suleiba was business-

like. He could not win customers by argument or by trying to convince them of crude tastes and unreasonable wishes; he did not let himself be drawn into controversy with Selim, nor criticism of Mohammed's blunders, nor gibes at Muslims whose immoralities fouled the air. He wished to arouse the young man's conscience to a loathing of evil that might prepare his thoughts to admit need of Jesus Christ; but the Kurd himself must open the way. Selim would come to him with difficulties met in the Bible, and discussion of them would be the time for planting seed thoughts. This was the whole plan of his campaign of enlightenment.

The superficial quality of the religious notions found in the Koran by the average Muslim is shown by the trivialities which for the most part make up his difficulties with the Bible. Selim was sure that parts of the Bible must have been lost. Its aim is noble and attractive but how to reach it is not clear. The Koran says that to each race has been given a Book and a beaten track; to Jews the Law of Moses, to Christians the Gospel of Jesus, and to Muslims the Koran. But nowhere in the Bible are found such details about what men should do as can be called a clear beaten track to the goal. The Bible

does not say how many times a day a man must worship, nor what words he shall use in worship, nor when nor how to wash the hands and feet, nor whether business for gain is right or wrong, nor what men ought to wear, nor whether it is ever right to wear silk. Selim was bound by the Muslim notion that religion is a set of rules for every situation in life, observance of which secures merit.

Sympathetically wishing to untie the knots, Suleiba took Selim into Leviticus, and when the young man said that this book was more like what he would expect from God, Suleiba pointed out that the precise rules were everywhere mingled with statements of great principles of devotion and of love to God and man. These rules he compared to the ruts in the mountain roads which serve to hold ox-carts on the path. But when people like those early Jews were being led out of paganism they absorbed the principles of a life for God which are the foundation of all the rules. Then they began to understand the will of God and to follow it with reverence although it requires far more effort than the observance of daily washings, genuflections and formulas.

"Your idea," said Selim, "that men must

do more than the rules require is hard to receive. The Koran teaches that God, seeing that the Jews and Christians could not do what was required of them, lays on Muslims no burden which is beyond their power. It commands us to pray the Lord not to lay upon us that for which we have no strength, but to forgive us and pity us. Men are frail and do wrong through the strength of their desires. What recourse have they but the forgiving mercy of God?"

"Selim," said Suleiba very seriously, "have you ever known one of your tribe who became a murderer or an adulterer?"

"Why, yes," answered Selim; "we kill such a man as we would kill a snake; he spoils the quiet and blackens the name of the tribe."

"Then you can see," said Suleiba, "why God, who has the peace and honour of all mankind to protect, cannot wink at our evil deeds because He pities us. For the good of all and for the sake of justice to all He has to insist that none shall do evil. Look at this matter from another side. You sincerely wish to draw near to God. Did it ever strike you that so long as evil practices are cherished in your heart because it is hard or uncomfortable to stop them, you could not bear for a moment to face the holy and

Almighty God? Entrance into Paradise does not hang upon the forgiving compassion of God but upon the harmony with God's will of the wishes of the man who asks admission. The Bible says truly that one day evil men will say to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.' "

Selim was greatly shocked at this plain speaking. But he knew in his heart that the words were true. A singular result of this conversation was that Selim abruptly stopped going to the mosque. He was unwilling to countenance by his presence what the worship of the mosque implies of lax ideas about wrong-doing. But the good deacon did not know of this significant step.

Being a man of long experience Suleiba was not daunted by the apparent failure of his efforts at Bible interpretation. The Koran, while claiming to be one with the Bible in authorship, repeatedly warns Muslims against Bible teachings. Suleiba spoke tenderly to Selim of learning from Jesus, whose words stimulate good impulses, and whose life is the one model of manliness.

"Oh, yes," replied Selim, "I believe in Jesus; the Koran tells all about Him. He was born of a virgin at a word from God,

and so He is called the Word of God. He did wonderful things; even in childhood He made a bird from the mud and when He breathed upon it, it lived and flew away. When He grew up He healed the sick and raised the dead, but the Jews wanted to kill Him. So God called Him and He ascended to heaven. He was a very great prophet, but though He did such marvels He could not get men to hear Him."

In view of the Muslim's opinion that he has all needed knowledge about Jesus, Suleiba told Selim of the blessedness which attends the believer who is led by the Holy Spirit and becomes a son of God, educated by his heavenly Father in all good things, and his character changed by grace. But Selim at once replied, "The Koran says it is sin to call men the sons of God as some do. It seems to me like laying lawless hands on the throne of the Majesty on High for a common man to call God his Father." Muslims generally believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth and destroy Antichrist. The fact is that no Muslim can become a godly man today until Jesus Christ has entered his heart to slay Antichrist there solidly entrenched.

Selim found himself shocked by the thought of God as Father to believers—an idea as

novel and offensive to a Mohammedan as it is fundamental and stimulating to a Christian. He could not grasp the glorious fact that God wills and aids the development of character in man. Belief in the divine ordering of destinies had implied to his mind that character is a fixed fact, like the colour of the eyes, unchangeable. His aspirations were limited by this belief to the knowledge of what good works God wishes him to do, so that ignorance might not lead to wrongdoing. But the proposal to add a new interpretation to the doctrine that destinies are eternally fixed by God was to him like a temptation of the devil. He could only say that he must think.

"The words are good," said Selim to himself after long thought upon this strange new topic, "but the man is better; if this man is a specimen of what God makes out of those who look to Him as a Father, I want to look to Him in the same way." He found in himself a feeling akin to that of a man who has set about enlarging and repairing his house, and learns that it will require much new material and the changing and strengthening of the foundation. The question then arises whether it were not better to pull down all and rebuild from the bed rock.

A few days later Suleiba with some hesitation invited Selim to attend the Protestant church. He thought that the young man would be less opinionated after seeing for himself the worship of the Christians.

"Are there pictures?" asked Selim.

Suleiba laughed. "You have burnt your mouth with hot milk," he said, "and so you blow ice-cream. No, Selim, God is spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The Protestant chapel at Mosul in those days was a dwelling house. Like the trustees of our congregations, those who adapted that building had no thought of the "man outside" when they failed to form a scheme of decoration. When the "man outside," in the person of Selim, entered the place, the bare interior decided for him in the first five minutes of the service the fitness of the place for true worship.

The service in the little chapel was to Selim like an appeal or rather a summons to listen to Jesus, addressed to him by men near to God. The summons was for him to stay with them and in humble honesty learn what they knew and he did not. He said little to Suleiba, save to thank him for bringing him there. A delicate wish not to embarrass the

stranger kept members of the congregation decorously aloof from him. So Selim went alone into the street and strolled by a round-about way to the basket maker's house.

That evening in his room the Kurd faced candidly the fact that these men outside of Islam, who follow Jesus Christ, truly worship God and must have been guided by God. A craving to secure the same guidance with its influence upon character struck at his lifelong Mohammedan prejudice. If these Christians do have the help of God, why should not he join them? A saying of Jesus Christ which had arrested his attention in the New Testament now came to mind: "Without Me ye can do nothing." His long struggle to reach a better life had been painful because he had fought alone; he must ask help of Jesus. Selim at last prayed. "O God," he said, "forgive me if I do wrong in looking to Jesus because this man Suleiba whom He has taught is the best man I ever knew. Forgive my ignorance if I do wrong in leaving Mohammed, bless me if I do right in joining myself to Jesus. I am in Thy hands, submissive to Thy will. Amen."

To Suleiba, when next they met, Selim did not tell his momentous decision, but he rather shyly said that he would try to learn more of

the teaching of Jesus about how a man may purify the heart.

"The Holy Spirit," answered Suleiba, "has long been drawing you towards the truth. Yield to this desire to know Jesus Christ. His words give life. You asked me once what religion I follow. Whatever I know of religion, whatever of God, whatever of right and wrong, of patience and love and kindness, Jesus Christ has taught me. For He, the one true, pure, holy man, in His life and words, and loving aim of good to men, shows God in the form of a noble man—in a form that every man can understand. He loved me and gave Himself up for me and shed His blood on the cross that I might not waste my life and perish in sin far from God. I love Him and have given my life to Him; and He helps and teaches me every day and I am beginning to know something of God through Him. You can know God, Selim, only if you take Jesus for your model, doing just what He directs."

Somehow Selim's inbred convictions, his prejudices, his suspicions had lost their heavy resisting power. In the presence of this servant of Jesus Christ they became thin as a fog grows thin we know not how; a light seemed to dawn within his soul, and he knew

that in Jesus Christ he had found what he sought. Telling about this experience afterwards this Muslim Kurd said, "When that man taught me I had to believe."

XIII

FOR THE SAKE OF MY PEOPLE

A PITHY Oriental proverb says, Only he who has fallen from a roof knows the pains of falling from a roof. Selim now began to sound for himself the depths of that bitterness of soul which besets every man who is cast off through religious rancour by his people. His own father had cursed him; his tribesmen gnashed their teeth at his name. He was to be an outcast; neither family nor sovereign would recognize that he ever existed.

It was strange that the certainty of such ostracism brought with it no regret for his act of allegiance to Jesus Christ. Like many people who almost imperceptibly drift into a decision that is novel and unexpected and radical, he could not turn back the hands of his clock. He had no sooner decided to follow Jesus Christ than he was as if he had been following Him for years. He could not do otherwise. The bitterness of his soul sprang from the ignorant injustice of his

kinsfolk. They thought him an infidel and a blasphemer. If he could only get his father to hear him he could convince him and his tribe that they misjudged him and his faith. Naturally he carried to Suleiba the burden on his heart.

Suleiba's garden was hardly more than an orchard of peaches, plums, and apricots, with its eastern end touching the river bank. Here and there in open spots along the side walls were a few flowers that could care for themselves. Marigolds lived with larkspur, stocks with wall flowers and crimson hibiscus with roses and jessamine. Along the eastern wall of the garden were thick woody geraniums which grew as shrubby bushes close to luxuriant masses of roses. Men going along the narrow foot-path on the river bank below the garden wall could gather from the overhanging branches sweet-scented yellow, or white, or crimson blooms to their hearts' content.

Selim felt like a convict under life-sentence who has received a pardon. He was now free; none could check his growth in power. Sitting with Suleiba in the evening among the flowers by the river bank he was trying to make the old man see that he could certainly lead his people to that vision of the Christ which had won his allegiance. He

must go back to his clan and give them the news of his discovery.

Suleiba liked the enthusiasm which he was forced to check. He told Selim that such a plan was foredoomed. Before he had found a hearing among those conscientious Mohammedans, they would smite him to the earth.

In the midst of this discussion a little girl came to tell her father that a stranger at the street door wished to see him a moment. Suleiba excused himself to Selim and followed the child to the house, wondering what this evening visit might signify. In cities without street-lamps people do not select the evening for calls. He wondered more and more when the visitor turned out to be Nicolas, his neighbour of the cotton bazaar. Nicolas was that one of the rubbish-throwers who had fallen in the street, and had been helped by Suleiba to rise and go his way. He would not come into the house, but speaking rapidly in a hoarse whisper he said:

"Hens lay curious eggs sometimes, but you have certainly laid a gem for an egg. You have delivered yourself of a plan for turning that young Kurd from his faith, and the whole city will shortly thirst to reward you. Did you expect to buy candy at the

cost of the flavouring? What did you suppose?"

"I have done," replied Suleiba, "just what I always shall do when a Gentile asks me about the Lord Jesus Christ. What has happened?"

"There is no time for long explanations," said Nicolas; "a crazy Kurd from this man's tribe has a grudge against him or a hope to inherit his property. So he has come six days' journey to Mosul to tell the Governor that this Selim is a turncoat knave who will upset the faith of all the Mohammedans in the city if he is not quickly killed. The Governor whom we have all thought a just and high-toned king has now become a boss. He has ordered a great council to meet tomorrow and the police will arrest Selim as soon as he appears at his shop in the morning. When there is a scarcity of true men the people will call a goat My Lord Abdurrahman. So these people think that the young Kurd is too precious to be allowed to go astray. The council is to force him to return to his own religion, if he likes life well enough to want any more of it. What they will do to you I do not know. But you got that poor fellow into this scrape and it falls to you to get him out. You must chase him out of the

city as soon as you can, or he will be carried out in pieces."

Nicolas turned away abruptly, afraid of being seen. But he turned back, for his heart was not made of sole-leather, to add that he was sending off a *kelek* (raft) load of goods for Tekrit the next evening and if that would be of use, it would be at the service of the foolish Kurd who let himself be converted from the rotten doctrines of the camel-driver of Mecca!

Shemmas Suleiba was perplexed. He had been the means of turning a Mohammedan from his faith. He had not sought this achievement. It had come to him. Selim had asked for light and by an impulse of generosity which one might wish was more frequent, Suleiba gave him what light he had. No! this was not all. The young man longed for knowledge of God. Any Christian was bound to give him the knowledge that through Christ, whom he knew not, the seeker can find God. Now Selim was about to reap the harvest from the seed which Suleiba had planted, and a whirlwind harvest it was! A Mohammedan who has turned his back on Mohammed for the sake of Jesus Christ is a renegade in religion, an enemy of his own flesh and blood, a traitor

to his sovereign the Caliph of Islam. So that atom in the great Mohammedan mass is condemned beforehand and in the name of the holy religion to lose his civil rights, his property rights, and in ordinary course even his life. Suleiba as the instigator of his revolt against Islam would be treated as accessory to the crime. It was not his own fate that perplexed Suleiba, but that of Selim whom the Muslims had planned to destroy. For himself Suleiba had no regrets. His Master's command was to teach men. He had done his duty and the result to himself was the affair of Him who issued the command. The whole problem related to poor Selim, lounging in his garden at that moment.

Suleiba trembled for the Kurd because when defense of their religion calls them from the ease of the self-seeker, Mohammedans shake off listlessness. They are transformed like a cat dozing on the lawn when a robin alights close by. Alert, eager, full of resource, they stop at nothing until they have crushed the rash free-thinker who would shake off the shackles of their tradition.

On returning to Selim, Suleiba did not find him on the bench where he had left him. In the darkness he shortly saw him, however,

close to the garden wall, partly screened by a bush, looking earnestly towards the river. At the sound of Suleiba's footsteps, Selim left the wall and came to his friend. "They were talking about me," he said, with an effort to swallow a lump in his throat. "I recognized the voice of my cousin Osman Aga. He was saying, 'The fellow must be killed. All his life he has been an infidel at heart, and he has no right to live another hour in this land of God's people.' The other man answered, 'Between mosque and church the fellow is hesitating and can really worship not at all. God will punish such wickedness.' At this Osman said, 'The trouble is you men of the city fear to be impolite. There is no need for ceremony. For a renegade the sword is polite enough.' Then the two men passed out of hearing. Why they were walking there I cannot imagine. They sauntered along the river bank, evidently without thought of being overheard. But they have let me know that the old manacles are to be forced on me again. 'Don't think, don't do!' The condition of my enjoying friendship is the wearing of a chain like a dog too fierce to run at large."

"Selim," said Suleiba, "sometimes we cannot see a step in advance, and sometimes

the path for us to take is as clear as if we could see the hand of the Lord pointing it out. To-day one thing is perfectly clear for you. You must flee for your life like Lot on the last night of Sodom."

Suleiba then told Selim of the gathering storm reported by Nicolas. Curiously enough Selim's mind looked backwards; he was more impressed by the fact than the substance of the warning. "Your kindness," he said, "to that man when he fell in the dust, gave him the measure of your stature; so he runs to warn you of trouble. To render good for evil is a good rule. It wins men like Nicolas.

"You say I must flee. But I must take word to my people of the way to better their lives. Osman wants to make trouble, but I will not run away from him. My place is in my father's tent. In his old age if I read the Bible to him and show him how we have been misled about Jesus Christ, he will see the truth, and join in my happy acceptance of the way to God."

"To speak of the Lord Jesus Christ to your father," said Suleiba sadly, "would be like writing on ice. The impression would wash itself away in a moment. First learn how to lay the truth before him, then try to

win him. You must flee at once for your life. But do not stay in these regions where what you wear shows every one who you are. Go to Constantinople. Find the missionaries there. Study under their guidance. After two or three years the people here will have died or at least they will have forgotten you. Then if a way is opened, you can come back to teach your people, sure that the Lord will come with you."

They talked long. Dilemmas on all sides finally allowed one problem to emerge; that of foiling the Governor's purpose to arrest Selim. They agreed that the simplest plan was the best. Selim would stay in his room and let the police tire themselves by waiting about his stall in the bazaars. Suleiba shrewdly guessed that this would oblige the police to consult their superiors before a new scheme could be devised. If the police should seek him at the basket-maker's house, Selim could escape through the garden, for not even the police would imagine that the garden of a house in the Mohammedan quarter would give their quarry passage to a house in the Christian quarter that was in the edge of the city, far from the basket-maker's door. Whether the police sought him at his room or not, it was agreed

that after dark Selim should pass into Suleiba's garden. Suleiba would make all preparations for the flight. He would have a bag of provisions ready, and a cloak and silken head-dress of an Anezi Bedouin Arab which he had long used in travelling. He would also arrange with Nicolas to have the raft drift a while near the foot of Suleiba's garden; and as soon as Selim was safely on board he could breathe freely since no one could foresee that he might go down the river on a *kelek*.

So Selim would safely reach Tekrit while the Governor was still seeking him in Mosul. Below Tekrit steamers of the English Lynch line occasionally appear on the river. If Selim could board one of these steamers he could easily make his way to Bussora and thence to Constantinople. "God will protect and guide you," said the pious deacon, "for He has certainly chosen you, a Paul, to work for Him."

To this fatherly blessing Selim said, "Amen!" He had sacrificed his wish to teach his clan for the sake of better service in the future. He believed that the sacrifice was accepted of God. In the warm enthusiasm of his broader vision of God the place where he stood seemed holy ground. Both

of these men humbly expected the next day to be of sacramental importance, for in a successful working of the plan for Selim's complete deliverance from the power that would take his life, they would see the hand of God. In this assurance they separated.

The Governor's plan for a dramatic scene at the council met several obstacles the next day. The police officers lingering near Selim's stall in the bazaars intended to make no noise in the arrest. Turkish officials delight in avoiding street scenes by getting a victim, through his own volition, into some secluded corner before he suspects their purpose to arrest him. In this case a man in plain clothes was to tell Selim that the Inspector of Schools would be glad to see him at the Government House at his early convenience. In the background the policemen would lurk to make sure that he accepted this polite invitation, and that he was thrown into a well-barred cell the moment he passed inside of the Government House doors.

It was full noon before the men detailed to execute this scheme sent to tell the Police Commissary why their enterprise had been delayed. Selim had not yet appeared at his stall in the bazaars. The Commissary or-

dered a quiet search for the young man. He wished to avoid any popular excitement.

Policemen loitered about the road to the Tigris Bridge in vain. Others walked about the bazaars. One ventured to ask Suleiba in his shop whether he had seen Selim Effendi that morning. Suleiba truthfully answered that he had not. Nicolas from his stall on the opposite side of the street came over and whispered to the policeman: "You need not bother Shemmas Suleiba. I was at his house last night and saw him alone. This Kurd is not there. Perhaps he has gone into the country to-day." Another policeman stopped before the basket-maker's shop and asked if Selim Effendi was in the house. "No," said the honest Hamdi, "I haven't seen him to-day for he doesn't sound a trumpet when he goes or when he comes. He is probably at his shop in the bazaars."

The council at the Government House waited impatiently for Selim to be brought before it, and in the meanwhile discussed the facts of his case. The Governor stated that this man had given him much concern. The interests of religion, always paramount in the minds of officials of his majesty the Sultan, required that the young man should be severely disciplined. Selim had the re-

pute of being a free-thinker, had left the seminary at Kerkuk in disgrace because of his irreligious habits. He had spent some time among the heretical Persians, and had been found by Colonel Ali Bey reading dangerous books which had very properly been taken from him. He had formed friendly relations with Christians, and had even attended their worship. "This disorderly and irreligious manner of life appears," he said, "to be a habit with him, and wise measures must correct it. But the young man is not yet in hand although the police are diligently seeking him. It remains for the council to suggest how the case shall be treated."

The Inspector of Schools remarked that Selim Effendi not only consorted with Christians but was separating himself from Muslims. No one knows what he does with himself. Colonel Ali Bey suggested that this alone merited severe punishment. The Commissary of Police informed the council that Selim had been seen reading a Christian book while waiting for customers in his shop. What the book was the police could not see but its handsome binding showed that it was the work of an infidel. Several men said that such conduct cried aloud for the imprison-

ment of the Kurd. But the Cadi asked whether Selim was faithful at the mosque. The Commissary of Police replied that the worst feature of the case was that for some time the police had not seen him pray in his shop at all. Careful inquiry had revealed that for some weeks Selim had not once been seen in any mosque.

"Great God!" cried Osman Aga who stood in a group of servants at the door. "Selim is already a renegade! In the name of the prophet he ought to be killed without any questions."

"It is clear," said the Cadi, "that this young man must be compelled to perform his religious duties. He must be made to cease friendly relations with the Christians; his dangerous books must be destroyed; but," he added, "let there be no lack of mercy in dealing with him, for our religion requires patient exhortation before the penalty of the law is inflicted. Let Selim be imprisoned in the dark dungeon for a week or ten days. After this affliction let him be brought before the council to be questioned. By that time he will probably be ready to repent. If not, let what is necessary be done."

So the Police Commissary was instructed to have his men get Selim promptly to the

Government House if he could be found. After dark the police were to go quietly to the young man's lodging in the Street of No Turning, and arrest him, searching the premises until his hiding-place should be discovered.

XIV

FROM THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER

OF the verdict of the Cadi, the bitterness of the council, and the doings of the police, Selim in his room naturally did not hear. Yet a man in his predicament cannot very well avoid recognizing his position as somewhat like that of a man walking a tight-rope. Like such an acrobat he had need of assurance that keeps the head cool; and quiet confidence is half of success. Fearing nothing the Kurd quietly waited for the dusk to screen his flight from Mosul.

While he chose the few things which he could take with him, he thought of the change that might be wrought in his tribe if they only knew that the submission of which Mohammedans boast implies the heart-sincerity which really believes God. How that one truth would quicken the old chief Hassan Bey! How kind-hearted, faithful Suleiman would be enamoured of the idea of help from the Almighty given with a Father's pity for

need! How living a life shaped by the words and deeds of Jesus Christ would lift to an unrecognizable plane the whole tribe; stopping bickerings, jealousies and evil covetings, and giving nobler meaning to the "brotherhood" which they often view as Joab did when he smote Amasa under the fifth rib. How the guidance of Jesus Christ would take fear and discontent from the women of the tribe, and give happy laughing faces to the children in the place of the dull gloom which grows with their growth. How could he go from them when he had so much that they ought to know!

Then he fell to musing upon the linked series of events which had drawn him to the discovery that Jesus Christ satisfies such a heart-longing as came to him, whence he knew not, while doing the routine duties of the Ramazan fast in the camp at the Kurd's Bed. In the seminary at Kerkuk a mere chance suggestion from a comrade had taken him to the old Fire-worshipper at Bijur and to the Bible. Thence first came to his soul some inkling of the confidence and the power that springs from devotion of the heart to God. A strange impulse had sent him to Mosul without strong resolution until despair in the valley of the Zab forced him to see

that ease and a full stomach are not the only things worth while. Even the episode in the Roman Catholic church had prepared his mind rightly to value Shemmas Suleiba. Had luck favoured his feet from step to step? No! One who wished his development had placed in his heart impulse after impulse which led him like a call from afar. The change of his feelings, of his gauge of values, and his new scheme of life were all of divine origin. He had reason for certainty that he was not alone as he started upon this adventurous journey. Was he a fanatic in his new faith as in the old? Such fanatics shape the world!

When the Commissary was preparing for the expedition to the Street of No Turning, Osman Aga appeared, anxious to join the party.

The Commissary agreed. "You can go and find the fellow," he said. "He will not suspect you, and you can hold him in talk. We will follow in a few moments and take him." To himself he thought, "When that crazy Kurd finds this rascally Selim, if anything happens it will be the will of God." And the Commissary chuckled.

Osman stumbled along the rough unlighted way until he reached the distant Street of No

Turning. There it was easy to recognize the basket-maker's house. He knocked at the door and asked for Selim Effendi.

"He must be in his room asleep," answered Hamdi from an upper window.

"Great God! this is no time for sleeping! His father has sent him a message by me. Wake him up and tell him to come down."

Hamdi called, "Selim Effendi! Selim Effendi! a man has come who wants to see you. He says he comes from your father." There was no answer. The basket-maker, carrying a tallow candle in his hand, pushed open the door of the room. The room was empty!

Hamdi went back to his window, which he closed after calling out to Osman, "He is not in his room."

"Open the door," cried Osman Aga. "I'll find him!"

To this Hamdi paid no attention, while Osman kicked and pounded at the door, cursing the basket-maker by way of persuasion.

The tramp of soldiers was heard in the street. "What are you bawling about?" said the Commissary to Osman Aga. "Do you want to bring out the whole neighbourhood? Shut the hole in your mouth!"

"They would not let me in," answered Osman, "and now they say he is not there."

The Commissary knocked at the door and gave the brief command, "Open!"

Hamdi first made certain from his window that rightful authority issued the order; then he shuffled down the stairs and threw open the door. Osman Aga tried to rush in, but was throttled and thrown into the street by the energetic Commissary.

"Are you Hamdi, the basket-maker?" asked the Commissary. "Where is Selim Effendi who lives in your house?"

"He generally comes in soon after the evening prayer and goes to bed. But to-day I think he did not go out and I think he has not come back. Selim Effendi is a Kurd and likes the open air; he may be in the garden now."

The Commissary sent three men into the garden to search it and to see that no one sneaked out some other way; he ordered two men to attend him while he searched the house from cellar to garret, excepting of course one room where the women of the family were shut up. He looked into every cranny, he held his lantern into every closet, he peered into big earthen water-jars, he probed with his sword the wide chimney of

the kitchen, and then he said, "Even a great magician could not make himself invisible so completely."

In Selim's room were his cloak, his bedding on the floor, a few reed pens and some writing-paper, a Koran, another book in Kurdish, which Osman afterwards testified was a book on astronomy, in Selim's own handwriting. There were also three or four silver coins on a sheet of paper with the legend, "The dues of Hamdi Aga." But of Selim himself there was not a hair.

The Commissary of Police was puzzled and angry. He could do no more. So he left three soldiers in the garden and three more in the street in front of Hamdi's door to seize any one who might try to pass in or out. Then he returned discomfited to police headquarters to send cavalry patrols to the Tigris Bridge and to the roads leading into the desert, and infantrymen to patrol the streets until dawn.

However, at the very time when the police began their search of Hamdi's house, Selim, in the dress of a Bedouin Arab, and carrying a traveller's saddle-bags, was saying farewell to Suleiba on the narrow path by the river under the roses at the foot of the garden. There was triumph in his hard-won freedom

from the tyranny of Islam. Yet his passionate yearning to tell his people without waiting a day what Jesus Christ can do for every man willing to learn of Him made this secret flight seem like a desertion.

"I have riches to spare," he said to Suleiba. "I might give them to my father and the tribe!"

"Yes," said Suleiba, "and some day God will open the way. To-day He only offers you this *kelek*. For the sake of your people take it thankfully. While you are away use every opportunity to prepare for the great work of your life. It is hard to part; but you must not linger here. Good-bye, my son; may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always; and may He bring you back in His appointed time to lead your people."

"Good-bye, my father!" replied Selim. "By God's grace I owe more than life to you. I shall see you again, if God will, although I am now fleeing in the night as if my new riches were stolen goods!"

Selim stepped upon the unsteady raft which, like Moses' basket of rushes, was destined for a greater service than its rough designers could imagine. For it was to bear this adventurous Kurd safely from the clutch of the enemies of growth.

Silently the men pushed off from the shore, and the raft of inflated goatskins, steered by long and clumsy oars, passed down the river and disappeared in the darkness. And so slipped away from the authorities at Mosul every clue that might have given answer to their baffling question: What became of Selim?

Selim has not yet answered the question of the self-complacent Mussulmans of Mosul. In a snug little room in the Akserai district of Constantinople, not too far from the missionaries whose warm regard he quickly won, he gave himself to the working out of his unchangeable purpose. His Kurdish kinsmen have not a single printed book in their own beloved language. Selim's purpose looked to preparing for them one book—THE book. Some day it will silently go forth. Being the first Kurdish book to be printed it will be read as eagerly as we read it because it is the noblest English book. In the fastnesses of the Zagros mountains that one book will act as a ferment in the tribesmen's minds, changing the point of view, the aims, and the sphere of vision of man after man and woman after woman. After a time it will lift little groups above the influence of the hoary Moham-

medan maxim, "Don't do! Don't think!" Then will begin the brave personal mission which will reveal to men what became of Selim the Free-thinker.

THE END

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